Canvases

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Canvases

by thatviciousvixen

Summary

When Hannibal meets a handsome artist with a keen interest in death he knows he's finally met a kindred spirit. All Will needs is a little push.

Notes

Updates on Sundays.

Oil, Canvas, Blood and Bone

Chapter Summary

> In the middle of the floor stands a nightmarish looking stag, a hulking monster born of gore and disease. Its legs are long and muscular and culminate in vicious looking hooves that end in a point meant to tear flesh and snap bone. The hulking size of it is a threat all its own, yet it is still aided by the look of pure mania and rage on the beast's face. Covering the body are thick, black feathers, a duochrome of blue and black iridescence, catching and reflecting the light in patterns that dance along its hide.
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>
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"Intriguing, is it not?"

Hannibal is drawn out of his careful consideration by a voice beside him, oily and simpering and slick. "Ah, Dr. Chilton. I did not expect to see you here," he says, face a carefully

constructed mask of polite interest. He's never liked the man, his shallow facade of poise and culture. "Are you enjoying the gallery?"

"Somewhat," Chilton says, giving a rueful laugh. "It's a bit dark for my tastes, I'm not sure I'll have an appetite for the rest of the week. I keep expecting to walk up to a piece and find it smelling of rot and death. My own overactive imagination I suppose." He puffs himself up a bit, smoothing a hand over his dark emerald silk tie. "I've grown quite recognized on the artistic scene, so I couldn't imagine missing the debut of such a bright young talent. As dark as he is. What led you in, Dr. Lecter?"

Hannibal lets Chilton's words skirt over him, never letting anything settle or stick. He absorbs only just enough to respond appropriately. "I was invited by a colleague, Dr. Hamilton from the university. He thought the exhibit might pique my interest." Hannibal looks around, gaze sweeping over the room. "He was called away unfortunately, his daughter took ill and he must pick her up from a friends house."

"Too bad, I'd love to meet him," Chilton sighs. Hannibal can see the gears in his tiny mind turning, imaging the benefits of ingratiating himself to the university.

He inclines his head in agreement. "Truly. Now, if you'll excuse me. I'd like to browse the next room." He quickly extricates himself from the conversation, moving to a section deeper into the building.

As he moves deeper into the gallery the paintings become darker. More erratic. It's an interesting progression, a fluid motion from controlled darkness and morbidity to chaos and madness. The artist is telling a story; Hannibal wonders if it's his own.

In the back corner, almost hidden among the larger pieces, is a small oil painting. Every shadow has been covered in a deep sable fur - mink, he assumes, it looks velvety and thick. As he examines the piece another man moves beside him, paying no mind to the work on the wall as he attempts to disappear into the shadows. Hannibal removes his eyes from the painting momentarily to glance at the young man beside him.

He looks tired and very much like he doesn't want to be there. Wary blue eyes examine the room from behind crooked glasses, his curly mop of brown hair just long enough to brush in front of his eyes. It's clear he either doesn't care much for fashion, or just doesn't know; his outfit is a simple navy button-up, tucked into simple khaki dress pants. He mainly looks to the floor, but every now and then he'll look up to sweep his eyes across the room, flicking from person to person. His eyes land momentarily on Hannibal, a blush coloring his cheeks before he quickly looks away.

"Not enjoying the show?" Hannibal asks, a kind smile curling his lips. What a lovely little thing, trying to hide among so many.

The man turns, but he is careful to keep his eyes anywhere but on Hannibal's. He settles for looking just below his right eye, hoping it is close enough to pass as eye contact. "Not exactly," he answers, tucking his hands deep in his pockets. "I'm not a huge fan of crowds. I got dragged into coming to this."

“Art-loving partner?”

“No, aggressive gallery owner,” he sighs, sounding extremely put-upon. “These are my pieces. I don’t see why that means I need to be here for people to enjoy them, though.”

Hannibal raises his eyebrows. “Your pieces. You’re the infamous Will Graham, then.”

Will shrinks down, wincing at the words. “Please, no infamy. I’m the Will Graham who didn’t want to be here but ended up here anyway.”

“Very well, no infamy,” Hannibal says warmly. He extends his hand, pleased when Will shakes it. For a moment he can see Will stretched out on a table, a myriad of colorful spring flowers blooming from his chest, fresh green vines wrapping his legs together. He’d look beautiful as one of his own art pieces. “Dr. Hannibal Lecter.”

“Doctor of what?” Will asks, managing to meet Hannibal’s eyes from under thick lashes.

“Forensic psychiatry. I was particularly interested in coming to see your show, the elements of death and decay juxtapose in an intriguing way with the more traditional mediums in your pieces. Where do you get your materials? Do you collect and clean them yourself?”

“Some,” Will says, nodding. “I fish, so quite a few of the smaller bones come from what I catch. Some from roadkill, most from the local butchers and taxidermists in the area. They hold on to their castoffs until I can visit once a week and pick through them.”

“A convenient trade off. They have less hazardous waste to dispose of, you have all you need to create,” Hannibal says with a nod. He beckons to a waiter passing by with a tray of champagne, plucking one of the long-stem flutes. “Will?”

“No, I’m more whiskey than champagne,” he says, managing a smile.

Hannibal considers him once more. Will doesn’t fit into the usual mold of the pretentious, self-aggrandizing artist. If he could melt into the walls he would, taking with him his anxiety and desire to disappear. “Ah, I’m sure they have something worth drinking available.” He looks to the waiter, who nods and excuses himself momentarily.

“Thank you,” Will says quietly, almost imperceptibly. It’s clear he’s not used to being seen as an equal, not in this world of glittering self-presentation and old money. He’s easy to overlook.

“It’s the least I can do,” Hannibal responds. “You’ve given me a great gift tonight, a contrast to the more classical works I’m used to.” He turns to look back to the work on the wall. “Pre-Raphaelite artists were just as obsessed with death as we are now, but they idealized it. Millais’ *Ophelia*, for example. She looks so peaceful resting in the water, so beautiful. Like she might wake up and step back onto dry land, lovely and perfect. That was how they portrayed death, either as a peaceful rest or a warning of hell.”

He steps to another piece, taking it in. A replication of a stained glass wall hangs before them, four feet high and three feet across. Holding the piece together is a lovely frame made

of rib bones, all curving away from the piece to create a complex barrier of sharp, twisting edges. “In our world as it is, we’ve given up on the idea of it as our final rest. We have so much to do and little faith in any sort of god or paradise, so it looms over us. Brackets the beginning and end of our life, much like this frame.”

Will nods, eyes on Hannibal as he speaks. “Yes, exactly. But death itself isn’t enough. Death is darkness, nothingness. It’s too big for us to comprehend to be truly terrifying. So we twist it among things we do understand, things that represent our life and vitality.”

“Perverting that with which we can relate to make it gruesome and monstrous,” Hannibal muses.

Will is lighting up as they speak. His hands have moved from his pockets and begin to move in emphasis with his words, passion lighting his eyes. “Exactly. I love the concept of uncanny valley. The more realistic and recognizable something is, the more you empathise with it. But there’s this one moment, this one tiny little fraction on the graph where something is almost *too* realistic but you can still recognize that it isn’t natural. So your empathy flatlines, and it horrifies you. We’re horrified by what we know but can’t relate to.”

The images in Hannibal’s mind are changing. Instead of Will on the table he now sees him sitting across from him, some other body spread before them. Some horrible excuse for a man that they’ve made beautiful together, more beautiful in death than he ever was alive. Will’s art would be a divine addition to the taking of human life, to turning hideous excuses for humanity into something consumable.

His thoughts are interrupted by Jack Crawford, bold and careless as he insinuates himself into their space.

“Ah, Dr. Lecter,” he says, smiling and shaking the man’s hand. “I see you’ve met the artist himself.”

Hannibal smiles, sending a knowing glance to Will who is once again trying to evaporate. “To my great pleasure. How do you gentlemen know each other?”

“I’ve worked with Jack before,” Will says, barely concealed bitterness in his voice. “There was a suspect using bodies to recreate classic works of art, I consulted for his team to figure out what he was trying to say.”

“Artistic, unhinged, and pretentious. A dangerous mix,” Jack says knowingly.

The waiter returns with a glass of whiskey for Will, passing it over. Will takes the drink gratefully, holding it with two hands as if to hide behind it. “Pretentious is a matter of opinion,” Will says with a shrug. “And so is unhinged.”

“You don’t think there were psychological factors at play?” Hannibal asks, his interest in Will growing exponentially the more they speak.

Will shrugs, a look of frustration passing his face as he tries to turn his thoughts to easily consumed words. “Crazy is subjective,” he explains. “Plenty of people in this room right now

think I'm crazy, or dark, or unhinged. I'm sure one or two have joked about me being a serial killer, or on my way to being one at least. In my head what I do is completely explainable. I'm sure the man who killed those people had all sorts of psychological factors at play, and plenty of circumstance leading up to what he became. But it does no good to write people off as crazy because we don't understand their thought process."

Jack chuckles in his condescending way, tipping his head towards Will. "That's why we call you, that overactive imagination. Crazy is as crazy does, though, in my book." He looks away as someone in the other room calls his name. "You'll excuse me, gentlemen."

The moment he's gone Will let's out a breath. "Asshole," he mutters, shaking his head.

They manage to regain the easy rhythm of their conversation, a journey through life and death that leads into how both have wound through their respective careers. Over the course of the evening something stirs in Hannibal, something he can't name and that he hasn't felt in a very long time. Steadily a possessiveness rises in him, itching to escape the confines of his ribcage any time anyone comes over and steals some of Will's attention away.

Still, every time it happens Will quickly snaps back, like an elastic pulled too thin and released. He repeatedly returns to Hannibal, walking him through the gallery and explaining his art, his process, his mind.

The night ends too quickly.

They find themselves standing almost alone in the space, joined only by a few members of the wait staff and some stragglers hoping to catch either one of them alone. With a sigh Will looks around. "I suppose I should say my goodnight," he says ruefully. "If I get caught by Dr. Chilton I'll never break free, and I need to get home to feed my dogs."

Hannibal suppresses an amused chuckle. "You've met him?"

"No, just heard enough about him to know I don't want to be spotted," he says with a sheepish grin. Despite excusing himself, he hangs back. A sheepish look crosses his face, like he's trying to pluck up the courage to say something.

Hannibal saves him the trouble, lovely creature.

"I'd love to continue this conversation," he says smoothly. "Would you have any interest in coffee later this week?"

Will looks up, shocked but pleased. "Yes, actually, I would."

Hannibal's heart twinges fondly at how surprised Will is by the proposal. He plucks up a cocktail napkin, retrieving the pen from his coat pocket and writing his number in a careful scrawl. Will does the same, his own handwriting a livid slash against the pure white background.

Will folds the napkin carefully, reverentially, before tucking it into his pocket. "I'll call you this week, my schedule is pretty flexible so I'm at your mercy." He offers his hand and a

genuine smile. “Until then, Dr. Lecter.”

“Until then, Mr. Graham,” Hannibal smiles, grasping his hand for a few moments longer than the customary handshake. Will’s hand is warm, rough and well-used. When he lets go Hannibal steps back, inclining his head. “Safe travels home.”

Will grins, a bit dazed. “Until then.” With a look of thinly veiled longing he steps back, biting his lip before turning away and disappearing to the back of the gallery.

Clever boy, Hannibal thinks to himself as he watches the younger man go. *I think I’ll have your heart.*

Adronitis

Chapter Summary

Hannibal and Will meet for coffee and skip small talk altogether.

Chapter Notes

Hmmm Hannibal tonight LET'S CELEBRATE AND POST THE CHAPTER AN HOUR EARLY.

PS want to harass me to write faster or geek out over AU headcanons? Come check me out on Tumblr here!

Hannibal arrives at the cafe in the midst of a thunderstorm, rain falling against the windows in uniform sheets. Every now and then a loud crack of thunder will shake the very frames of the building and lightning will illuminate the world outside in an unnerving brightness. Amidst the chaos outside he finds a quiet corner in the building, a private table near the back.

Just as planned, he arrives well before Will does. Hannibal much prefers to be ahead of the game; arriving late leaves you no time to survey your surroundings, no time to prepare. You're at the mercy of others. Arriving twenty minutes before Will awards him the opportunity to know the playing field, to plan his escape if he is to end up needing one.

Pale, rose colored walls surround him, each table and booth set with vases of bright, fresh flowers that chase away the gloom of the rainstorm and fill the cafe with a lovely floral scent that blends with the coffee and pastries being made behind the counter. Chairs, benches and booths are deep, polished cherry wood, just enough red tinted through them to catch the color of the walls and bring out deep ambers and garnets in the wood. The light is dim, intimate. It will catch beautifully off the golden warmth of Will's skin.

This place is a favorite of his. Remote enough that it attracts business without attracting tourism, the drinks are artisanal and the atmosphere calm. Only a few other patrons occupy the place, all sitting towards the front to enjoy the rain as they write in their Moleskins and tap away on their MacBooks. He himself often comes to work on his poetry and watch his fellow patrons go about their business here. The baristas are the only ones who can make drinks that almost hold up to his own.

Almost.

Hannibal is pleased when Will arrives early as well - not quite as early as himself, but ten minutes before their date is meant to start. He's tried to dress up a bit more for the excursion, dark grey slacks and a black dress shirt, a pea coat much nicer than the jacket he'd had on at the gallery. His hair is neater, brushed out and off of his face.

"Will," Hannibal calls, lifting his hand in greeting. When he walks over they share a short, polite embrace.

"I hope I didn't keep you," Will says, checking his watch. "The rain set me back a bit, there was an accident just off the highway exit."

Hannibal waves a dismissive hand. "Please, you're still early. I haven't been long at all."

Peeling out of his coat, Will smiles nervously as he takes his seat. It's clearly a task for him to make or hold eye-contact, but he's doing his best. "I can't say I've been here before, I'm used to drinking black coffee out of styrofoam cups. Any suggestions?"

He's pleased that Will is already asking for his expertise. It never hurts to have one's ego stroked. "Black and strong?" He thinks for a moment after Will nods. "I'd suggest the Stereo blend. They order it in from a roaster in Oregon especially, Many people who come here won't drink anything else. How's your sweet tooth?"

"Insatiable," Will answers with a grin.

"Excellent," Hannibal laughs. "It has notes of toffee, apricot and cream that'll you'll probably enjoy."

"Sounds like dessert, I feel vaguely naughty," Will teases. "So, Dr. Lecter. How do we want to do this? Awkward but affectionate small talk, or are we delving right into the bigger questions?"

Hannibal considers this. Small talk seems to be a cornerstone of society and communication, but they've already gotten to see so much of each other from their conversation at the gallery. "Correct me if I'm wrong, but I feel like we understand each other enough already to glean what our answers to pithy questions will be. Would you mind if we skip them and go straight to the deeper ones? I'd like to know who Will Graham really is."

They pause for a moment to order coffee and pastries. A bear claw for Will, a cranberry and orange scone for Hannibal. Only once their cups are steaming comfortably in front of them and Will has a fork to fiddle with does he answer.

"Let's do it. You'll have to excuse me though, I'm not always the best conversationalist. I have a tendency to be more blunt than most people are able to handle."

"Please, give me exactly who you believe yourself to be," Hannibal requests, smiling warmly. "I want to see everything underneath your armor."

Will takes a sip from his mug, pausing for a moment to look at it with a delighted - and vaguely surprised - expression. "Okay. The real Will Graham. I'm ready, go." He shifts in his

chair, clearly a bit nervous. Hannibal can't decide if he wants to go easy on him or if he wants to devour him. In any sense of the word.

"Alright," Hannibal begins, grin almost wicked. "Your last relationship, what ended it?"

Will laughs, eyes wide. "You really do go right for the kill, don't you?"

Hannibal's eyes light up with mirth, crinkling slightly at the corners. "You have no idea."

"Alright well. After skirting around each other for years as slightly tense friends, I began a tenuous relationship with a woman who was wary of me from the beginning. I know it's my fault... she seemed terrified at the idea of a relationship with me, it wasn't my place to try to convince her. She liked me well enough as a friend, quite well even. And I think from the beginning she struggled with her feelings for me. She didn't *want* to love me. Still, we tried it, it ended badly. Turns out I'm just as unhinged as she anticipated."

"I highly doubt that," Hannibal says firmly. "You don't have to be unhinged for a relationship to be unhealthy for you. Sometimes it doesn't work and no one is at fault. We decide whether relationships are worth the risk, and sometimes we're wrong. It's a fact of life."

"Fair," Will nods. "Should we check if you're on my insurance plan before we continue, Doctor?"

"I find the need to insist you call me Hannibal," he tuts. "Or I'm going to begin referring to you as 'Up and Coming Young Artist Will Graham.'"

When Will laughs he tilts his head back, exposing the strong cut of his jaw and the line where he tried to clean up his stubble a bit before coming. His curls bounce, and when he straightens out there is a sparkle in his eyes. Hannibal is once again possessed by the aching knowledge that he must possess this man, must sculpt him as Will sculpts his figures made of fur and bone and clay. It's going to be ecstasy, tearing him apart to rebuild him.

He does wonder, though, just how much breaking down Will is going to actually need. There is an inkling, a sneaking suspicion in the back of his mind, that they do not have far to go.

"Alright, *Hannibal*. My turn. You're clearly not a blue-blooded American boy, and you didn't move here early enough in your childhood to be indoctrinated early. As an adult man, how do you find the American experience?"

"There are more McDonald's than I anticipated," Hannibal answers, unable to hide his own smile as Will laughs again. "To be honest, it's a difficult question for me to answer. If I worked a middle class job with a nuclear family and dated exclusively women I might be able to provide a solid answer. As it is, I'm the outlier in too many instances to know what it should be." He sipped his espresso as he thought. "There are certainly aspects of it that I find deplorable, but my largest grievance is with the wide-swept lack of manners. There are of course countries all over the world where people are rude, but they're at least rude with decorum and a basic understanding of custom. Custom seems to have fallen apart here, and with it went America's manners."

Will nods. “I understand the viewpoint. I can have a tendency to lash out with my rudeness, but luckily I can recognize the behavior as a problem and try to prevent it next time.”

“A behavioral issue, or just a bad habit?” Hannibal asks, tilting his head slightly.

“Well. I’m definitely somewhere on the spectrum, and the anxiety that comes with it can loosen my tongue, but it’s not like that’s an excuse. I still know it’s a poor habit.” Will reasons.

The conversation goes on like this for quite some time. It’s easy - too easy for men talking about every topic designed for discomfort and awkward silences. They cover their families, mental illness, sex, a whole spectrum of conversation pieces. Hannibal finds Will looks best when he’s put on the spot, so it immediately becomes a game to see what questions will make him squirm, what insights will set him on edge.

“You’re trying to catch me off guard,” Will laughs, cheeks flushed as they finish the latest round of questioning. “Don’t think I can’t tell.”

“Your mistake is in assuming I’m trying to hide the fact,” Hannibal laughs, finishing his second espresso. “Is it so wrong that I like to see you squirm? Vulnerability is attractive in its own way.”

Will finishes his own cup, pushing it to the side. The rain outside is finally winding down, the slow, steady tap of fat raindrops against the windows slowing considerably. Hannibal looks toward the entrance, considering the sky. “I wonder if it will clear up today. I didn’t think to check the weather before I left, my patient was running late today so I was in a bit of a rush to get out the door.”

Will rests his elbows on the table, folding them neatly as he leans in. “Patients on a Sunday?”

“It’s rare. This one has a complicated work schedule, so when he can’t maintain a workday appointment with me I make a concession. He’s a good client and we’ve made much progress since we began, I would hate for him to have to start over with a new therapist.”

“That’s gracious of you,” Will says. “I’ve personally always had a hard time with psychiatrists.”

“Trouble finding one you can open up to?” Hannibal asks. He himself leans back, legs crossed but body language open and approachable.

Will shakes his head. “No, trouble deciding if I like myself the way I am or not. There are parts of myself I’m not quite sure I want to give up, and I think those are the parts a professional would target right away. Extract. I need the dark, weird pieces of myself left intact, those are the only real pieces that I understand.” He looks away, considering. “Who knows, maybe if I’d had you as a psychiatrist I would have had a better time of it.”

Hannibal reaches over, lightly touching Will’s arm. The simple contact makes him jump, eyes wide as he returns his gaze to Hannibal.

“I am glad you didn’t. I think I’d much rather have you in this capacity than as a patient.”

A vicious redness colors Will’s cheeks, spreading down to his neck. Hannibal wonders if it continues down to his chest, silently vows to find out for himself at a later date. He pulls his hand away, drawing in a deep breath. “With that admission, I’m afraid I must leave you for the afternoon. I have some business to attend to tonight, as much as I’d love to spend the rest of the day putting you on the spot.”

Will’s smiles, tugging at his bottom lip with even, white teeth. Perfect teeth for rending flesh from bone. “I understand, I need to let my dogs out before they go crazy. The rain makes them antsy.” He stands, slipping into his coat and slinging his bag over his shoulder. “This was great, thank you.”

“The pleasure is all mine,” Hannibal insists with another of his well-constructed smiles.

They go back and forth for a moment over who is going to pay, but Hannibal wins the battle by suggesting Will pay for their next date. Will is stunned enough that Hannibal has a moment to slip to the counter and hand his black AmEx to the barista. Once everything is squared away he tucks his wallet into his pocket, putting a hand on the small of Will’s back and leading him outside.

“I hope I won’t have to wait too long to hear from you again,” he says as they avoid puddles that have filled throughout the parking lot. “My work schedule isn’t very erratic, I’m often free in the evenings and during the weekends, save the early hours of Sundays.”

“I work when inspiration strikes, so it shouldn’t be too hard to negotiate.” They stop in front of a vaguely beaten-up hatchback sedan, and Will fumbles to get his keys from his coat pocket. “I’ll call you soon. Not too soon,” he says quickly. “Not overly-needy soon, but soon.”

Hannibal can’t help what can only be described as a grin. “Don’t worry about standing on decorum, Will. Call when you like. I’ll certainly be looking forward to it.”

This time when they embrace Will turns his head in, dry and slightly-chapped lips just barely catching the corner of Hannibal’s mouth. He pulls away quickly, cheeks aflame as he rushes to get in his car and put the safety of steel between them.

Hannibal watches in amusement before stepping away, letting Will imagine he’s being given space to recover. As he slides into his own polished Bentley he can’t help but think he’ll possess the man much sooner than he intended.

La Douleur Exquise

Chapter Summary

Hannibal decides it's high time he cooked for Will.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The progression of their relationship is smooth, if not a little cautious. Coffee turns into dinner, dinner turns into attending a mutual colleague's dinner party together. After that third outing he decides it's high time he cooked for Will.

It takes a week of preparations to procure the meat. He's lucky enough to run into a deplorable excuse for a human being, an oncologist with a practice just on the edge of the city; Dr. Alan Rutherford. Hannibal is visiting his favorite cheesemonger when he has the misfortune of quite literally running into the man. Rutherford doesn't seem to watch where he's going as he steps back onto Hannibal's foot, causing him to lose his balance and fall backwards. Hannibal catches him easily, setting him right and dusting off his own coat.

"I beg your pardon," Hannibal says politely, despite the interaction being no fault of his own.

The man turns, narrowing his eyes. "Do be careful, won't you?" he drawls, raising an eyebrow before turning back to the selection of charcuterie behind the counter.

Once he has made his purchases and left the shop in a huff Hannibal turns to the girl working, offering an understanding smile. "He must be quite the joy to work with."

"Who? Oh, Dr. Rutherford!" she gasps, eyes wide. She's young, perhaps no more than nineteen, with dark skin and a halo of tight curls surrounding her face. "He's awful." She leans in conspiratorially, lowering her voice so her manager doesn't overhear. "Last week he made my friend Libby cry because we didn't have the cheese he was looking for. I mean, I know the appenzellar is delicious, but that's really no reason to yell...you know?"

Hannibal clucks his tongue sympathetically. "Poor girl. I think we forget that those who work retail are people too, not our personal servants. Especially those of us that shop in higher end shops like this one. Your friend, is she feeling better now?"

"Oh yeah," the girl nods, curls bouncing. "She's great, we went dancing later and she forgot all about it." She stops, grinning sheepishly. "I'm so sorry, is there something I can cut for you? Anything you'd like to taste?"

Hannibal smiles. "What cheese pairing would you suggest with liver?"

A few minutes later he emerges, a hearty block of stilton and an aged British cheddar in his bag. On his way home he picks up a bottle of Pinot Noir, assuming he can coerce Will into sipping some wine for the sake of flavor pairings.

The rest of the week is a slow stalking of his prey. He follows Rutherford carefully, absorbing his work hours, prying into his family life, reading articles online about his career. He doesn't seem like a man who will be well missed. Online forums and job-rating sites show that his employees have no love for him. There are divorce records, and two children that live with his ex-wife in upstate New York. There is also a proclivity to work late so that he may use work computers for things Hannibal suspects are not entirely savory.

Hannibal waits for one of those nights, when Rutherford's cherry red Escalade is the only one in the office parking lot and the streets are empty and still. He parks his car around the back, a thick copse of trees hiding it from prying eyes. He finds the back door is unlocked - foolish, foolish man. Doesn't he know there are wolves about? Still, he's grateful for the thoughtless animals that make it so much easier to hunt them down. With a dark smile he slips inside, silently closing the door behind him.

*

Will opens the door, surprise clear on his face. "Hannibal! I didn't know you were coming." He turns quickly to gauge the presentability of his work space before turning back around and smiling. "Come in, sorry about the mess. I'm breaking down some materials today so it's a little...scattered."

Hannibal leans in, kissing Will lightly before walking past him and into the studio. "You've been working hard this week, I thought you could use a decent lunch to keep yourself going. Are there any tables not in use right now?"

Will looks around, chewing on his bottom lip. Three large tables take up the room, all with various items organized neatly on them. They form a large "U" around the area. To the left is a table with various scraps of fur, dark sables and light and fluffy pelts, some antique looking coats that Hannibal assumes will be cut into smaller pieces. The table lining the back wall has bones of all shapes and sizes, for the most part still in the order they came out of the animal in. The table on the far right holds teeth, seemingly organized by size. This leaves a great gap in the middle of the room, a large space Will uses to put his larger pieces together.

"I think...oh! Yeah!" Will heads over to what seems to be a storage closet, disappearing inside. He comes out carrying a folding table that he opens up in the center of the room. Two chairs are pulled from their spots, and he quickly wipes them down. "I uh...really appreciate you doing this," he says softly. Hannibal can hear the genuine gratitude in his voice. "I forget to eat pretty often when I'm working, so this is great."

"Think nothing of it," Hannibal says, setting the picnic basket down on a chair. He's a man who comes prepared; out comes a table cloth, covering their eating space in clean white linen. Two wine glasses, plates, cutlery, everything they need to dine. He sets the food out, beckoning for Will to sit. "It's nothing too complicated, just a cheese board with liver pate, kalamata olives, honey and a mango chutney. There's merlot, I know you don't normally drink wine but I thought you might be persuaded as it goes with the meal."

Will looks at the spread with wide eyes. “I can be persuaded. This...is amazing. Thank you.”

“Think nothing of it,” Hannibal smiles. He chooses a slice of thin, crusty bread, spreading on a bit of honey before topping it with pate and a slice of the stilton. “Hard cheeses always pair nicely with softer meats, I think you’ll enjoy the texture.” Once it is carefully constructed he leans forward, offering it to Will.

Will leans in, carefully taking a bite. He chews slowly, closing his eyes and savoring the taste. “Amazing,” he sighs. “Cheese for me usually comes in a plastic sleeve, so this is a new experience.”

“Ah, I’ve much to show you, then,” Hannibal laughs. He pours the wine, setting Will’s glass in front of him. “All the employees at the store I frequent know me by name at this point. I dearly love to share food with people I care for, it’s an emotional experience. So many of our memories are tied to things we’ve eaten, things we’ve tasted and enjoyed and remembered. I think there’s something very deep and important in that.” He looks at Will, who’s smiling dazedly. “What is it?”

“You care for me,” Will grins, sipping his wine.

“Of course I do, you daft boy,” Hannibal laughs. “I don’t feed just anyone by hand.” He makes his point by offering a grape, Will leaning forward to take it in his teeth.

They continue on in comfortable conversation, and when lunch is finished and cleaned up Will stands to continue working while Hannibal stays to flip through articles on his tablet. “Have you ever had the misfortune of reading Tattlecrime?”

Will snorts, hunched over a table as he carefully cleans a glass eye he bought from an antique dealer. “I hate that woman. Freddie something? London?”

“Freddie Lounds,” Hannibal supplies, flipping through crime scene photos mysteriously procured by the journalist.

“Right, her. You can tell she’s trying to make a quick buck off of it, she’s got no respect for anything. She asked me for an interview once, told me she wanted to land an article on a serial killer before his first victim. I told her that her teeth would look great as a windchime, which was probably not wise to say to a woman with a tape recorder.”

“No Will, not entirely wise,” Hannibal laughs. “I do find her to be abominably rude, but I can’t help but visit her website every now and then. She’s got photos up today from a crime scene last night; it’s gruesome, but it’s staggering how...artistic it seems.”

Will wanders over, wiping his hands on a towel he keeps draped over his belt. Leaning down, his eyebrows raise as he examines the photos. “You’re not kidding.”

A rough circle had been made in a clearing, some twenty or thirty miles out of Baltimore. The frame of it is mainly sticks and long branches, creating a rough sort of structure, and every so often there is what appears to be a rib bone twined in. In the circle is a man, legs together and arms straight out, as if crucified.

“Are those...Jesus,” Will breathes, pointing to one of the photos. Another set of limbs had been attached to the victim, a new arm growing out of each shoulder and a new leg from each hip. “It’s supposed to be the Vitruvian Man, isn’t it?”

“I imagine so,” Hannibal nods, exhaling. “How could someone manage such brutality in open air without being noticed?”

“Don’t know, but he must be good,” Will muses. He shrugs when Hannibal looks at him in surprise. “You can’t deny the talent. To do something like that without being spotted? Whether we agree with the morality of it or not, it’s high art.”

Despite having to hide the emotion, Hannibal is pleased by the praise. “Good thing Freddie Lounds is not here, imagine the headlines,” he hums, suppressing a grin.

“Ass,” Will snorts, moving back to one of the tables. “If I’m a serial killer that makes you my Squeaky Fromme, so I hope you like tye-dye and headbands.”

Hannibal stands, tucking his tablet into his briefcase. “I’ll be sure to start my collection this weekend, darling. I’ll leave you to your work, I have some sessions to prepare for.”

As Hannibal approaches Will he feels tension settling into the other man’s body, a sort of nervous energy in his posture. They both know it’s coming before it actually comes. Instead of the usual light brush of lips, Hannibal tilts Will’s chin up with his fingertips, just barely tilting his own forward as their lips meet. This time they do not draw away too quickly. Will’s lips are warm and soft, and just a bit chapped at the corner where he’s always chewing them. Hannibal is once again struck by the desire to pull him apart, consume him - in one way or another.

Will makes a soft noise, a barely audible sound of encouragement in the back of his throat. His hands slide up Hannibal’s sides, stroking along the soft material of his jacket before moving back to wrap around his waist. The movement pulls Hannibal closer, pressing their bodies together and allowing Will to deepen the kiss.

Hannibal hums his agreement, sliding his hands along Will’s arms and up to his shoulders. Long fingers move delicately to his neck, stroking the skin there with his thumbs. He lets them rest just over Will’s collarbones. He could squeeze his hands together, right here and now. Press the life out of him, take Will’s breath as his own. And yet...

Will is so sweet in his arms, so malleable. The man is clearly touch-starved, Hannibal can tell in the way he sighs at every soft graze of fingertips, every press of lips. With an affectionate smile he flicks his tongue out, just barely tasting Will’s bottom lip. Will immediately responds, opening his mouth to Hannibal and letting their tongues twine together; it’s soft, easy. Their bodies are compatible, alarmingly so, and Will is so willing to submit to him.

If he’s not careful, this man will consume him first.

With one more soft kiss to Will’s jaw Hannibal pulls away, slightly more flustered than he usually allows himself to be. “I fear if we continue we’ll ruin something in your studio.” He

is unable to resist leaning back in to suck teasingly at a swollen bottom lip. “Dinner tomorrow? I’d love to have you over.”

Will grins, eyes wide and glassy. “I’ll be there. Six?”

“Six is perfect. Bring an overnight bag.” After a few more greedy kisses Hannibal is finally able to pull away, smoothing himself back out and grabbing his brief case. “Happy sculpting, Will.”

Will only leans against a table, grinning and disheveled as he crosses his arms to watch Hannibal go. It’s hard to resist closing the gap between them to dishevel him a bit more, but with a great deal of self control Hannibal forces himself out of the building and onto the chilly Baltimore street.

Chapter End Notes

This one went up a bit early, I am so excited to crash and go right to bed after Hannibal! Thanks for reading so far my darlings <3 As usual check me out on tumblr and we can geek out and be the very best of friends.

The Awful Edges Where You End and I Begin

Chapter Summary

> “I need you,” he breathes, eyes heavy lidded as he glances over his shoulder.
>
> Hannibal’s breath catches, fingers tightening into the backs of Will’s thighs. “You already have me, Will,” he says, the admission lifting off of his chest like the first breath of clean air after years spent underwater. “You have every inch of me, you dangerous boy.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

> The first snow of the winter has just begun to fall outside as Will’s car pulls into Hannibal’s driveway. As Will steps out and turns up his coat to the cold the fresh powder falls onto his curls, clinging to eyelashes and the five o’clock shadow that Hannibal can feel on his fingertips even when the two are apart. He is already so eager to touch, mentally chastising himself for letting his usually impeccable patience slip.
>
> He manages to wait for Will to knock, counting to five before calmly opening the door. Careful. Constructed.
>
> Will himself is a flurry of excitement and nerves as he steps in and stomps his feet on the mat. “Sorry I’m late,” he rushes, cheeks ruddy and pink from the cold. “I dropped my glasses, scratched the hell out of them. I had a backup pair at home and honestly thought I had time to run back and grab them.”
>
> Hannibal pulls Will in, silencing him with a kiss. “It’s only been seven minutes,” he soothes. “You really must relax.”
>
> “Tall order,” Will replies, chasing Hannibal’s lips with his own as he draws away. He leans into Hannibal’s warmth, the chill of his skin dissipating between them. Hannibal smooths his hands over Will’s back, sliding his lips softly along high cheekbones.
>
> “Come,” he murmurs, “I’ve started the fireplace. I’d like to get you warm.”
>
> This is not Will’s first visit to his home, he’s seen it once before when Hannibal had to take an emergency call before a movie date. Still, his eyes flicker about as if he hasn’t yet had the time to take it all in. Hannibal realizes that this is unavoidable; the house is sizable enough and he’s amassed a fair collection of artifacts, paintings, and books in his travels. Will’s honest intrigue sends a warmth down Hannibal’s spine - he’s got so much more to show him, beyond the facade of *home* he’s constructed for himself. So much Will is going to learn.

On the way to the study Will stops, eyes drawn to a framed sketch on the wall. “You did this,” he realizes, voice a gentle, affectionate accusation as he looks at the signature.

“I did,” Hannibal says, placing his hand on the small of Will’s back.

“You never told me you’re an artist as well!”

“That is because I don’t deem myself an artist,” he says demurely. “I merely sketch anatomy. My gaze is purely scientific, studying what is already there. Your gaze, your hands, your mind...they give life to the lifeless. Create ecstasy where there was none.” He leans in, lips brushing Will’s ear as he murmurs, “My interest is in the human figure. All its charms and gifts. I am merely a slave to graces that already exist.”

Will shivers, licking his lips. “You’re good,” he laughs, shivering. Hannibal can sense the way his pulse quickens. This is exactly how Hannibal wants him, gentle peaks of arousal over the course of the night until he is a tightly wound coil lying in Hannibal’s bed.

“Thank you,” Hannibal smiles, leading Will to the chairs set in front of the fireplace. “Dinner won’t be long, I intend to have it plated by seven.”

“Please, no rush,” Will insists, happy to sit in front of the cheerfully crackling fire and warm his limbs. “I always forget how cold it gets up here as soon as the leaves fall.”

Their conversations are comfortable by this point, familiar. Hannibal knows that he has Will on the line, that all he must do is play to his affections and his sense of family. It’s important for a man abandoned by his mother and ignored by his father, he needs the assurance of a unit, a pack. Despite being a solitary monster Hannibal can draw on what he’s seen through others, draw on what he can remember of his short time with Mischa.

He can be a family man, if it is for the right family.

Looking across the fire at Will, Hannibal can see all the compliments to his own strength and cunning wrapped up in one person. He never expected the man before him, never would have dreamed of finding a lover and a protege all in one. Yet here Will sits, magnificence boiling inside him, a thing of darkness wrapped in fine, handsome features and a sharp mind.

His fondness surges over dinner as he watches the carefully procured and prepared meat slip past Will’s lips. It is Rutherford’s heart - a bit heavy handed, but fully meant nonetheless. While it is not the first time he has prepared his victims for an unknowing audience, this time it is so much more important. *I’ve done this for you, not to you,* he thinks. *Because you are so much better than the cattle outside of our divine little world. You deserve his beating heart more than he ever did, and I deserve yours more than anyone else. Even you.*

His eyes may be playing tricks on him, but for a moment Will’s eyes meet his own and Hannibal can swear he understands everything.

After dinner they return to the study with wine and whiskey, tongues loose and laughter easy. Hannibal carefully brings his theremin into the room and sits deliberately close to Will to teach him how to use it. Will is clearly torn between the hot line of their bodies pressed

together and his helpless laughter at the terrible noises his hands are managing to produce from the instrument.

“Is it supposed to sound like this?” he laughs, wiping his watering eyes.

“Not remotely,” Hannibal says sternly, dropping his serious expression and smiling broadly with amusement as Will is lost to a fresh wave of laughter. “I am sorry to be the one to tell you my dear, but I fear you’ll never play Carnegie Hall.”

“Alright then, Salieri, impress me,” Will snorts, motioning to the theremin.

“I don’t get to be Mozart?” Hannibal asks, carefully making his move. He slides a thigh on either side of Will, his chest pressed firmly to the other’s back as strong arms encircle him.

Will goes tense, Hannibal’s presence felt through every inch of his body. “I’m afraid you’ll have to earn it,” he says, voice trembling in his throat.

Hannibal intends to earn much more than that. As he begins to play his body shifts and moves against Will, their skin separated only by thin layers of fabric and nothing else. It is so easy, so right, how Will melts into him, the way his body longs to be played just as Hannibal plays the theremin. The scent of hot blood rushing to the surface of his skin as he blushes is intoxicating. Is there no way to pull Will apart and put him back together without losing any piece of him? Is there no way to consume him and have him whole, all at once?

Well, perhaps one way.

Will’s breath changes, becoming shallower. The rapid beating of his heart, like a desperate, caged bird, is so out of pace with the hauntingly slow music that Hannibal almost loses himself to the desperation of the moment. Instead he squeezes his thighs gently on either side of Will’s, letting him feel the strength of the muscles below.

“Hannibal,” Will sighs, mouth dry and throat clicking.

In response Hannibal turns his head, drawing his lips along Will’s clenched jaw. His hands never stop moving, focus never breaking. “Yes?” he hums, voice low and predatory. “What is it you need, my dear?”

Will laughs softly, as if struck by the absurdity of the situation. “You,” he manages to say, despite it being against his very nature to say such a thing. “I need you.”

Strong, steady hands leave the theremin, moving to slide down Will’s chest and across his thighs. Hannibal moves one hand back up, turning Will’s chin far enough to the right that greedy lips can meet over his shoulder. It holds the same passion as the kiss in the studio, with the added promise of more to come.

“Shall we move upstairs?” Hannibal asks against parted lips, sliding his fingertips along the inside of Will’s thigh.

Will moans softly, parting his legs in invitation. “Yes, please.” For a moment Hannibal cannot pass on the opportunity given. He slides his fingers over the growing hardness in Will's

slacks, drinking in the pleasant sigh that rewards him.

They somehow manage to extricate themselves, Hannibal stopping to kill the fire before taking Will's hand and leading him to the stairs. An eager, comfortable silence falls over them, one that follows them into the bedroom as they kick off their shoes and Hannibal shrugs out of his dinner jacket. Soon they're laying together on the soft down covers, mouths getting reacquainted after their short time apart.

"I've been thinking of this nonstop since yesterday afternoon," Hannibal breathes. It's vaguely alarming how Will inspires him to speak his simplest truths. It is a gamble, but it's one that he expects will pay off.

Will hums his agreement, adjusting to kiss along the sharp strength of Hannibal's jaw. "I know what you mean. I doubt I accomplished any work worth keeping today, my mind was too scattered to tell any sort of story."

Sure hands slide down Will's sides, carefully untucking his shirt and pushing it up enough to stroke the bare skin of his lower back. He pulls away, letting himself sink into the dazzling blueness of Will's eyes. "Before we begin, is there anything we need to discuss? For your comfort or mine?" Hannibal asks, pressing his thumb to Will's lower lip.

Will hums, allowing himself a moment to drag even teeth along the offered digit before responding. "Nothing I can think of. Got the usual check up after my last partner, all clear. Brought condoms and lube. Nothing traumatic that I want to avoid, I'm totally ready to go."

"Clever boy," Hannibal says, voice nearly a purr as he once more devours Will's mouth. This time there is no pause for conversation or relocation. Hannibal's hands move to Will's belt, Will's hands lifting to deal with Hannibal's shirt buttons. Before long they lay pressed together, skin bare and hearts pounding in a desperate attempt to find a rhythm to match.

Soft skin arches and presses against Hannibal, and with an appreciative noise he lifts onto one elbow to take in the body before him. Will is all lean muscle, hard angles and freckled skin. A light dusting of chest hair is barely visible, though it does narrow and darken into a thin trail that spreads out once more at Will's groin. Powerful thighs attach to sharp hips. At the apex of his torso, eager and flushed, is the rapidly thickening length of Will's cock.

His shaft his thick and slightly curved; uncircumcised, which is always a pleasant surprise this day and age.

"Will," he breathes, the name falling from his tongue like a hymn. "Wonderful, divine, perfect creature. How I've lived so long without feeling you against me I'll never know." He licks along sharp collarbones, fingertips grazing Will's stomach. The muscles underneath twitch and flex, causing his cock to jump slightly at the movement. "Do you trust me? I want to bring you apart, to make you feel as you never have…"

Dizzy under the litany of praises, Will can only nod as he moans his acquiescence. His hands lift to card his fingertips through Hannibal's soft hair, disturbing the style and ruining his carefully crafted composure. "Anything," he swears. "I'll give you anything."

Hannibal's thoughts, dark and heated, come unbidden. *Of course you will*. Pushing the possession aside for the briefest moment he slides away to find a better position on the bed. This puts him on top of Will with a thigh on either side of his hips. Will immediately arches up to the proud jut of Hannibal's own length, a sound of raw need slipping from his throat. Hannibal "tuts" gently, smoothing his hands down Will's narrow chest. "Be patient," he commands, leaning in to steal a kiss. "Trust me to give you what you need…"

Will shudders, giving a small nod. Pleased at his submission, Hannibal rewards him with a slow, deep roll of his hips. It brings their erections together and draws a moan from Will's mouth that's like a dagger to his heart, sharp and swift and completely ruthless. He should kill him now, before Will has a chance to consume him first. He knows this. Yet all he can do is lean in, pressing down against the body below him and kissing Will like it's his last grasp at the life he's spent decades trying to build for himself.

His lips find the path without thought or consideration, biting and sucking kisses along the column of Will's throat and down to his collarbones. Will squirms but accepts what he is being given. Does not demand more. He kisses down a pale throat that leads to a narrow chest, sculpted from years of lifting heavy sculptures and living a life of self-sufficiency. Hannibal takes a moment to consider the flush of Will's skin before putting his mouth to work. He parts swollen lips, lightly drawing the tip of his tongue around an already pert nipple. At Will's appreciative sigh he closes his lips around the tender flesh, sucking and kissing and biting in turn.

"Jesus Hannibal," Will groans, cheeks flushed. Sweat is beginning to stick his hair to the back of his neck, the curls near his temples damp. "That feels amazing."

"You taste like nothing I've ever had before," Hannibal pants, smoothing his palms flat over Will's belly. The muscles below once again tremble; Will is clearly sensitive to touch, he spends so much time distancing himself from it that it's no wonder. Hannibal preys on the fact, stroking along his heated skin, drawing goosebumps and moans and all sorts of lovely reactions from his darling Will.

Will runs shaking fingers through Hannibal's hair, tugging slightly. "You going to fuck me?" he breathes, eyes dark as Hannibal looks up. Usually the crudeness would set his teeth on edge, but something about such filth pouring from Will's pristine mouth makes his aching prick take notice.

"Would you like that?" he asks, drawing his tongue along a hip before sinking his teeth into the meat of Will's side. Will barely conceals a shout, thighs parting under Hannibal.

"So fucking much," he grits, hands splayed in the duvet. "I've been thinking about it since the day we met, bending over one of my work tables and letting you have me." He gasps, eyes going wide as Hannibal moves to bite the opposite hip. After each bite he sucks the skin, ensuring a dark bruise will bloom soon enough. "I'm dying to push you onto that huge ridiculous desk in your office and ride you until the patients in the waiting room can hear us, fuck Hannibal…"

Hannibal slides up, biting into the flesh of Will's lower lip and tugging viciously. "Wicked boy," he growls, taking Will's erection in hand and pumping slowly. "Your mouth is

absolutely filthy.” The glint in his eye tells Will that this is not at all unwelcome. It burns him, singes his edges to hear what Will dreams of when Hannibal is not there.

“You think about it too,” Will pants, smiling wildly. “Tell me you haven’t thought of taking me wherever you could, consequences be damned.”

Hannibal lifts his hand, pressing two fingers over Will’s lips. “Is there nothing better you can do with your mouth?” he asks, voice low.

Will immediately takes the hint, drawing Hannibal’s fingers into his mouth and sucking the digits. His eyes burn bright as his tongue draws over the pads, moving lower to lick between and over his knuckles. He makes soft, pleased noises, gentle hums to show how he savors the taste of Hannibal’s skin. Hannibal rewards him by leaning in, drawing Will’s nipple between his lips and sucking gently.

He’s immediately rewarded with a soft gasp and a roll of Will’s hips. He’s sensitive, lovely. Returning to the soft flesh he licks gently before closing his teeth around the bud and giving just enough pressure to make Will exhale in a hiss of breath. Will’s hands find their way into his hair, tugging firmly. “Hannibal, please,” he begs, writhing. “Come on, I need more…”

Pulling away, Hannibal presses a firm kiss to bruised and bitten lips. “Some day I’m going to have to tie you down and teach you some patience.”

Will licks his lips, sliding his palm flat along his own hips and stomach. “Is that a promise?"

Hannibal gives him a dangerous look, a promise for later before opening what appears to be a well repaired antique cigar box. He removes a condom and lube, a sleek looking black bottle that looks more like high end skin care than personal lubricant. He sets the items on the bed, leaning down to kiss Will softly.

“You will tell me if I do anything you don’t enjoy?” he asks, lips and voice soft, heavy affection in the way he nuzzles just below Will’s jaw.

“I swear,” Will hums. “I trust you.”

You shouldn’t. “Excellent. Onto your stomach, please.”

Will obeys, grabbing one of Hannibal’s expensive down pillows and tucking it under his chest. Hannibal takes another, gently lifting Will’s hips to prop it underneath. “Has it been long, darling?”

Will shakes his head, thighs tense and trembling in anticipation. “No, I um. Have a few toys.”

A thousand lovely images flood Hannibal’s mind, images of Will thrusting something thick and wicked against his needy prostate as he sprawls across his bed. Images of Will standing with his hand braced against his bathroom mirror, watching his own expressions hungrily as he reaches behind himself. Hannibal’s mouth goes dry and it takes everything in him not to skip the preparation and thrust right into Will’s waiting warmth.

No. This is their first time together, and Hannibal won’t see it rushed or ruined.

Taking a few calming breaths, he slides his hands along Will's lower back and further down to palm the firm muscles of his ass. There's no doubting the man is well proportioned, with nicely toned thighs and two sweet dimples just where his back dips and curves. He leans down, drawing his tongue across the soft indentations of flesh before kissing lower, right to Will's tail bone. One hand grabs the lube and flips the cap open. Will clearly catches the noise, shivering and moaning.

"I need you," he breathes, eyes heavy lidded as he glances over his shoulder.

Hannibal's breath catches, fingers tightening into the backs of Will's thighs. "You already have me, Will," he says, the admission lifting off of his chest like the first breath of clean air after years spent underwater. "You have every inch of me, you dangerous boy."

He doesn't want to see the understanding in Will's eyes, doesn't want to hear his breath catch or give himself time to dwell on what he just said. Instead he slicks two fingers, circling them gently over Will's waiting entrance. The noises he's rewarded with are a symphony, a beautiful litany of sighs and curses as Will lifts his hips a bit to encourage Hannibal's strong fingers to breach him and caress those sweet places deep inside. Hannibal teases him a bit, nothing but light touches, gently stroking against aching skin.

"Tease," Will mutters into the pillow, hair scattering over the deep blue pillowcase.

"Impatient," Hannibal returns fondly. He finally presses in, two fingers past the tight ring of muscle and into the beautiful heat inside. Will moans softly, spreading his thighs a bit wider as he's filled and carefully spread. Hannibal's breath seems to catch in his throat as he rakes his gaze over the angles of Will's body. "Impatient and perfectly beautiful," he adds, breath escaping his chest as a reverent sigh.

Will groans in response, lazily rocking his hips against the pillow below him. He's so sweet and compliant; there's no great resistance, just his body eagerly accepting Hannibal and everything he offers. Hannibal wonders how far this submission can go.

Fingers grasping at the sheets below, Will's back bows beautifully as Hannibal adds a third finger and twists. He's beginning to feel a slight resistance, Will's body fighting the stretch it's being given. "Relax for me," Hannibal purrs, leaning in to nip along the shell of his ear. "Let me have you, let me give this to you..."

Will nods, drawing in and releasing a shaking breath. He rests his sweat-slick forehead against his arm, making a conscious effort to relax for the man above him. After a moment Hannibal can feel the sudden give, feel the release of tension around his fingers. He rewards Will by crooking them just so, as if to beckon him closer.

The sound that slips from between Will's lips is wholly undignified. It's a devastated sort of whine, a ruined sound that claws out of his chest like a frightened animal trying to escape its prison. His hands reflexively grip tighter in the sheets and nearly pull them off of the mattress.

"There?" Hannibal breathes, unable to hide the breathless triumph in his voice.

“Yeah, oh yeah,” Will gasps, low and husky. “More, please, come on…”

Hannibal decides to pity the boy, beautiful and ruined on the bed below him. He slowly removes his fingers, taking a moment to grab a hand towel he’d tucked in his night stand to wipe away the lube. He rolls on a condom, slicking his length with just enough lube to prevent any unnecessary pain. “Tell me if I hurt you,” he breathes, stroking along the backs of Will’s thighs. It’s part egoism, part genuine concern; his erection is thicker than most, and it’s clear that Will is looking more for connection than pain.

Pressing a soft kiss to the back of Will’s curls, Hannibal takes a moment to thrust the tip of his cock teasingly along Will’s entrance. When Will begins to gasp and press back he is filled with a warm affection for the man who already needs him so dearly. Sinking his teeth into his lower lip Hannibal finally presses in, eyelids fluttering shut.

The feeling is just as divine as he had anticipated; there’s a sense of completion as he thrusts in, sinking right to the hilt as Will pants and pushes back against him. He can feel it right to his very soul. It’s a feeling of having found a missing piece of himself, a feeling of finally finding home wrapped deep in someone else’s skin where he would never have thought to look.

“Will,” he breathes, as if the air as been sucked from his lungs.

“I know,” Will chokes, pushing up onto his hands and arching his back. “I know.”

Hannibal sets a slow rhythm; there is nothing in the world that could possible make him rush this, this gentle exploration of Will’s body. As he rolls his hips he lets his hands wander, stroking along Will’s back and sides, down along the backs of his thighs, back up to squeeze his ass.

“Tell me what you need,” he moans hoarsely, almost unable to recognize the sound of his own voice. Begging sounds so foreign from his tongue. Still, he is desperate to hear Will moan and cry out as he tries to speak, desperate to find exactly what Will strip him down to his basest desires.

Will is too overwhelmed to speak, meeting each thrust with a roll or swivel of his own hips. He manages to reach back, taking the hand resting on his left hip and drawing it around to his leaking cock. “Touch me,” he chokes out, toes curling at the mere thought.

Hannibal willingly obliges, wrapping his fingers around Will’s length and giving long, slow tugs to match the pace of his hips. After a bit of teasing he angles his hips, keeping his movements slow but dragging the tip of his cock torturously over Will’s prostate again and again. Will practically whines at the stimulation, and as he begins to tremble Hannibal speeds up the motion of his hands. It takes concentration, but he keeps it up; slow thrusts, tight, fast flicks of his wrist over Will’s shaft.

Will barely knows what to think, which sensation to focus on or what to ask for more of. Everything seems so off-tempo and *perfect*. Hannibal is pushed in all the way now, grinding hot and dirty against his ass while he gently squeezes the base of Will’s dick. He returns to stroking quickly, paying special attention to the head.

He cannot say how long this goes on for. Time seems to stand still around them, allowing an eternity in which to build this bond between them.

Will gives a sharp cry, beginning to feel the stirrings of his orgasm low in his stomach. “I’m c-close,” he chokes, eyes shut tight. “Fuck, I’m going to come Hannibal, I’m right there…”

Driven by the sounds of helpless need coming from Will’s lips, Hannibal takes pity on the man. He wraps a strong arm around Will’s hips, drawing him back sharply as he speeds up his thrusts. Slow, languid movements have turned brutal, his hips flexing as he pushes deep each time, the tip of his cock angled straight to Will’s prostate.

“Come for me,” he growls, leaning low to speak right into Will’s ear. “Let go, Will. Let me see you come apart.”

Will grits his teeth, and with the noise of a dying animal he spills into Hannibal’s hand and onto the expensive pillowcase below his hips. The way he tightens around Hannibal makes stars burst behind his eyelids. Forcing Will’s hips down onto the pillow, he thrusts down hard into his tight channel before his own release races through him like an electrical fire.

The sounds he makes are inhuman. He is inhuman. And he has found his other, as perfectly monstrous and dark as he.

After a dizzying moment of completion they manage to separate. Hannibal disposes of the condom before returning to bed, staring up at the ceiling as Will tries to catch his breath next to him.

He can sense that Will wants to speak. There is something on the tip of his tongue, something he is afraid of or is not yet ready to admit. Hannibal is not quite sure he’s ready to hear it, to face the truth of it himself. After a long moment Will moves closer, hiding his face against Hannibal’s neck. It is coming. There is nothing he can do, not at this point.

“Hannibal,” Will stammers, voice trembling with anxiety. “I um. I have. Really strong feeling about you. About us.”

As soon as the words are spoken Hannibal dies and is reborn. The monster inside of him grows to a fiercer beast, a beast willing to burn down the world for what is his, for what he has won. He will slay a thousand cities for Will, hunt and cut out a thousand hearts until the true extent of his adoration is known.

He loops an arm around Will’s shoulders, kissing the top of his head. “I know, dear Will. I love you as well,” he says, staring into the darkness.

His eyes hold a fierce challenge. Let the world try and take this from him.

Chapter End Notes

This is probably the most effort I've ever put into a sex scene, for whatever that's worth.

Current progress: story is written up to chapter seven, though from five on they're unedited. Once all the chapters are complete I'll ditch the weekly schedule and post the whole thing.

As usual, tumblr is here: clicky!

The Smoking Gun

Chapter Summary

A visitor comes in the night, threatening to ruin everything Hannibal has with Will.

Chapter Notes

Time to switch up the posting schedule a bit. Posting on a work night isn't working for me, when the time comes I'm usually so mentally and physically beat that I can't put the energy I need into doing the final read-through of the chapter. I'm changing post dates to Sundays so I can do my final proofread and edit on the weekend. That means we don't have to wait a week for chapter five!

As usual, I'm on Tumblr here. Come hang out with me and let's talk about Digestiv and how it broke me inside D:

PS the title from last chapter comes from the song The Horror of Our Love by Ludo. Check it out, it's one of my favorites.

As his admiration and adoration for Will grow, so too grows the body count in the local morgue. By the time the snow melts and spring looks meekly from behind its curtain of ice the FBI has noticed a pattern and have begun to look for the serial killer they've dubbed the "Chesapeake Ripper." Hannibal finds the name to be a little heavy handed and extremely erroneous; he doesn't *rip* anything. Every cut is made with surgical precision. He would not settle for anything less, not when it comes to the meat that is feeding his dear Will.

Will has begun to spend most of his nights with Hannibal, a comfortable rhythm growing between them as their lives intertwine and spill forward. Hannibal finds it surprisingly easy to coexist with Will; his lover is quiet and polite, passionate, only moved to ire when his mental health is deteriorating or called into question. Never does he lift his voice to Hannibal or bare his teeth in challenge. His outbursts are directed only towards those outside of their comfortable coexistence, those who would question his sanity or write off his work as "grotesque" or "demented." It is easy for Hannibal to calm him, easy to stroke his hair back and remind him that the world outside is a mob of the foolish and easily frightened.

"They cannot help but force their narrow moral codes onto things they do not understand," Hannibal soothes. Will is stretched out in Hannibal's single foot copper bath, the older man stroking affectionate fingers through Will's hair as he calms his nerves. "You cannot expect

the common crowd to understand, not when you are so much more than them. You are writing in a language they have yet to learn, a language they have not even discovered."

Will reaches up, taking one of Hannibal's wet hands and giving it a firm, grateful squeeze. There is nothing he can say to that, nothing that needs to be said.

Hannibal knows he is besotted, positively doomed, when Will asks to bring one of the dogs along with him one night.

"I'm sorry, I normally wouldn't ask," he says, voice crackling through the static on the other end of the line. It's been a stormy week and today is no different, bright, booming thunder occasionally interrupting their conversation. "Winston hurt himself chasing a rabbit a few days ago and with the storm I don't want him to get spooked and hurt himself any further." Will is clearly anxious over the request and the health of his pet. "Your house is gorgeous, and I hate to bring a dog into that, but I brought some blankets I can lay out for him in the guest bathroom and he'll be fine…"

"Will," Hannibal interrupts, standing at his office window and watching the rain. "I can't imagine where you gathered the notion that I don't like dogs, but I am more than happy to have Winston over. At some point I'll have to get used to them, won't I? It's not as if we're going to keep a second house for them later."

He can practically hear Will smiling on the other end of the phone. "That's um. No, you're absolutely right. We'll see you soon, then."

Having a dog in his home does not turn out to be as traumatic as Hannibal anticipated, but in the morning he calls in a groomer and has the friendly little mutt cleaned and styled appropriately. Winston isn't going anywhere, so he may as well fit in with the decor.

*

It is a crisp, cool day in March that Hannibal finds himself spending the night in Wolf Trap. He drives out early in the day to surprise Will with some gifts for his art, scraps of fur and hide and a few various teeth he has collected from his recent hunts. The day ends up too lovely to spend inside, so they spend the evening on the porch watching the dogs frolic as they sit in companionable silence. Later, with the stillness of midnight settling over the house, they fall asleep in a sweet tangle of limbs that makes it nearly impossible to tell where one man ends and the other begins.

Hours pass in relative peace before something deep within Hannibal forces his eyes open.

Out of a dead sleep he wakes to a noise downstairs, soft and barely perceptible from the second floor of the creaky old house. More than the noise, it is the knowledge of someone infringing on his territory that wakes Hannibal from his place next to Will.

Gently extricating himself from his lover, Hannibal straightens out his silk sleep pants before pulling on the sweater he'd discarded in the middle of the night. Deep at the base of his spine he feels something hissing and uncurling; this is not a hunt, this is *defense*. The animal inside of him is threatened, knows its home and its pack are threatened. Whoever has intruded upon

the comfort of his life does not deserve the skill and artistry he usually applies to his craft, they will be torn apart with teeth and bare hands and a snarling, insatiable rage. A lesson to all others who might come too close to what is his.

Hannibal walks silently downstairs, muscles tense and poised for attack with each step. The kitchen. He can hear motion in the kitchen, barely audible footfalls and the slow opening of drawers. How this has all gotten past the dogs is beyond him, but he intends to have a stern talk with the lazy beasts come morning. Drawing in a breath and straightening his spine, he steps into the room.

Tobias Budge stands at the counter, one of Will's few good knives in his hand. He tilts his head as his eyes meet Hannibal's, smiling cordially.

“Good evening Dr. Lecter. I hoped to find you here.”

Hannibal mentally chastises himself while keeping his expression and body language wholly uninterested. He’d recently had the extreme misfortune of meeting Budge over the corpse of his roommate, and the two had shared a tense dinner full of thinly veiled threats and forced small talk. He knew this moment would come. It isn’t possible for two monsters to exist in one fairy tale. Still, he’d hoped it would happen in his own arena. He’s spent so much of the past month carefully deciding on how to introduce Will to his true self, let him see what he is deep underneath his constructed persona. He would hate to have to show his hand before he’s ready.

“Tobias. My partner has so few decent cooking utensils, I must ask you not to damage what little he has.”

“Don’t worry,” Tobias says smoothly, twirling the knife with the practiced dexterity of a musician. “I’m fairly skilled in its use.”

Hannibal holds his ground as Tobias circles around him, calmly turning on the heel of his foot to keep them face to face. He quickly goes through the inventory of items available to him. There are a few heavy statues about the room, but they are all from Will’s personal collection. He would hate to harm anything so meticulously worked on and beautifully wrought, especially by such perfect hands. The living room desk is littered with fishing lines and lures, and other than that it’s nothing but furniture and books.

It’ll have to be his hands, then.

“What brings you by Tobias?” Hannibal asks casually, arms neutral at his side. "If I expected company I would have at least put on coffee."

Tobias laughs, an amused chuckle low in his throat. The noise sets Hannibal’s teeth on edge - he feels as if he’s being laughed *at*, which is of course detestably rude. “You know why I’m here, Dr. Lecter. You know that we can’t exist in each other’s orbits like this, two meteors constantly in danger of colliding. We could either work together, or one of us could subdue the threat. You turned down my offer of friendship, so here I am.”

With that Tobias seems to be done with conversation. The first swipe of the knife is easily dodged, aimed low enough to his left that he can step to the right to miss the blade. Budge is too interested in seeming dangerous and quick to fully calculate his moves. That's the pride of youth, relying on strength and putting no thought into strategy. Still, it bodes well for Hannibal as he anticipates each move and easily avoids them. When Budge stabs towards his face Hannibal uses the momentum, grabbing his arm and using his shoulder to flip him to the ground. The resulting crash wakes the dogs, a cacophony of barks and howls and whines coming from upstairs.

Will must be awake by now. He'll be down soon enough; Hannibal has to make this quick. Unfortunately the thought distracts him just long enough for Tobias to gain an edge, lunging up to ram his shoulder directly into Hannibal's ribs. He falls back with a loud "oomph!", taking down a coffee table in the process. Tobias makes another dive with the knife, stopped only by Hannibal's forearm against his own.

They lay like this for a long few minutes, neither daring to move lest they lose their ground. Tobias' teeth are startlingly white as he bares them. Hannibal wants so dearly to bring his head up against them, to smash them in and watch as he spits out bits of blood and bone across the hardwood floor. Unfortunately to move that far in would bring the knife in direct contact with his face.

Hannibal can feel his limbs beginning to tire. It's true that Tobias has the hot-headedness of youth, but he also has the advantages of youth; his muscles are eager to rend and tear just as Hannibal's are, but with much more vitality and endurance. The knife inches closer, point hovering just over his left eye.

"I'm going to finish you, then I'm going to murder your boyfriend," he says, voice as casual as if they were talking about the weather. "I'll let him see you first, of course, then I'll turn you both into something much more useful. Musical. Will's ribs seem awfully percussive, don't you think?"

Hannibal grits his teeth, something akin to a growl in the back of his throat. He's going to make one last bid, roll them sideways, smash Tobias' head against the corner of the table until his face resembles nothing more than a slab of ground meat. For Will.

A shotgun blast goes off to his right, close enough that his ears ring and light sparks behind his eyelids when he blinks.

Tobias scrambles off of Hannibal to distance himself from the blast. A few feet away Will stands in his boxers, shot gun in hand and pointed at the intruder. Dogs cower behind him; he looks like some sort of avenging angel in plain white shorts and bare feet. Hannibal looks towards Tobias, where mere inches above his head a hole has been taken out of the wall, letting moonlight stream into the living room.

"Hannibal?" Will calls, voice steady. "You're alright?"

Hannibal rises smoothly to his feet, walking over to put his hand on Will's shoulder. "I'm alright," he murmurs softly, stroking a calming hand down the nape of Will's neck. Will

doesn’t move a fraction of a centimeter; he keeps the gun trained on Tobias, who stands with wide, curious eyes and his hands up in momentary surrender.

There is a look in Will’s eyes that Hannibal cannot place, but it lights a fire in the pit of his stomach. He steps behind him, pressing his lips to the back of his head. “I’ll call the police,” he whispers, stroking his hands along trembling sides. “Stay here, keep the gun on him.”

Tobias sits with his back to the wall, smiling. “Are you going to risk sending me to the police, Dr. Lecter? That seems awfully self-sacrificing of you, with what I have to tell them.”

Hannibal stops on a dime, turning a cool glare at Tobias. He doesn't say a word, but his eyes send a very clear warning. *Stop now. Ruin my life and I'll be sure to end yours.*

Tobias shakes his head, pulling his knees to his chest and resting his arms there. He looks at Will, eyebrow raised. “Your partner has quite the interesting extracurricular activities. It’s how we found each other, actually. He came in to buy strings for his violin and we ended up having a very enlightening meal together. What did you say it was, Doctor? An Italian?”

Hannibal remains calms, never removing his eyes from the man across the room. There is nothing he can say, so he waits.

“If you send me to the police they’ll know everything about you soon enough. I’m sure it won’t be hard to link you to the Ripper murders. If you let me leave tonight we can at least figure it out on our own. Like gentlemen. We’ll meet again I’m sure, and in no time at all, but at least one of us will get to walk away from it.”

Hannibal levels Tobias with his gaze, eyes narrow and lips pressed into a thin line of annoyance. “Keep him here, Will. I’ll go get the phone.”

He barely makes it back into the kitchen before he hears the second gun shot. Turning on his heel he rushes back in, struck by the sight of Will with a smoking shotgun in his hands and Tobias Budge now no more than a headless body and a mist of gore against the wall.

“Will,” he says sharply, rushing over to remove the gun from his hands. He puts the safety on, carefully resting it against the couch. “Will, what have you done?”

Will looks up at him, eyes wide like he can’t fully believe what’s happening. “I-it’s...we figured it out on our own. Like he said.”

Hannibal draws back, stunned. “What are you talking about?”

“It’s like he said,” Will says forcefully, wild eyes and sweating. His lips are pale, pupils blown wide. “Either one of you walked away or neither did. I don’t...I’m not completely sure what he was talking about the whole time, but I get the jist of it. I’m not blind Hannibal. He was going to take this all away.” He sways slightly, caught from collapsing by Hannibal’s firm hands on his waist.

“Will, you killed him. I know we can justify it as self defense but there was no need-”

He's interrupted by Will's laughter, manic and bright. "I wanted to, though. I wanted to kill him, Hannibal."

There is a long moment of silence where all Hannibal hears is Will's laughter and the steady drip of blood and viscera hitting the hardwood floor. The dogs have begun to step curiously to the corpse by the door, nosing delicately at the mess and whining for their master. Hannibal makes a sharp noise with his tongue, sending them scattering.

"You're having a panic attack," he finally manages, regaining his composure. He needs control of the situation, needs to bring it back within his grasp. "I'm going to give you something to help you relax, Will. Is that alright?"

Will nods, looking dazedly at the body he's left where a person used to be. Hannibal can see that he's itching to go and touch, to really take in what he's done. That small, curious fire within Hannibal recognizes this face, knows it as the same curiosity he felt the first time he killed.

He draws Will away, guiding him back upstairs and into bed. After getting him carefully tucked in he plucks up his medicine bag, finding a clean syringe and a small bottle that he holds up to the light.

"Any allergies to medications, my dear?" When Will does nothing but shake his head he draws enough lorazepam into the syringe to leave Will asleep for the remainder of the night. His lover doesn't flinch as the needle slides smoothly under his skin, merely looking over at Hannibal and blinking sluggishly.

"I wanted to kill him," he repeats, voice calm.

"I know, my love. And you did it quite well," Hannibal soothes, disposing of the syringe before crawling into bed with Will. "I will take care of everything, I want you to relax and think of nothing. When you wake there will be nothing more to worry about."

Will nods, humming. His adrenaline crash times beautifully with the effects of the injection, and soon he is sleeping heavily in Hannibal's arms. With a sigh Hannibal kisses his forehead and slides out of bed. He's got a mess to contend with downstairs.

Growth and Recovery

Chapter Summary

> He wonders how long Will has known. How he figured it out. He doesn't seem surprised enough for this to be wholly new, but something in his eyes tells Hannibal that it's fresh enough that Will doesn't quite know how to handle it. He trembles, the sunlight coming through the window outlining his silhouette as he clenches and unclenches his fists.
>
> One of two things is going to happen, and Hannibal is not entirely sure he's prepared enough for either. There's darkness in Will, enough that a dam deep inside of him could burst and let all of his pain and fear and curiosity flood out. He could realize his true place at Hannibal's side, become the monster that Hannibal wants him to be. A thing of beauty and evil and madness.
>
> But he might not.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

By the time the sun wakes and lifts his brilliant head over the horizon Hannibal has managed to clean up the mess downstairs. It takes quite a bit of scrubbing and some creative use of Will's tool box, but he scours the blood and brain from the wall and tucks Budge away to be dealt with later. The carefully wrapped body is left in the freezer in the shed, which he locks with a rusty old padlock he finds abandoned on a shelf.

He returns to the house to find Will sitting at the kitchen table, wrapped in a blanket with his head in his hands.

"How do you feel?" he asks, moving behind him to massage the obvious tension of out his neck.

"Still pretty groggy," Will mutters, although he does relax under Hannibal's sure fingers. "I'm not entirely sure right now that last night was real."

"I'm sorry to say it was." He strokes Will's hair back off of his forehead before adjusting the blanket over his shoulders. He can feel him tremble, the movement passing from Will's tense muscles to the tips of Hannibal's fingers. "I've cleaned the living room and put the body somewhere safe until we call the police. We don't need anyone stumbling on it before they arrive, before we both remember the night exactly as it happened."

Will stands suddenly, dropping the blanket and moving to put the coffee pot on. It's movement for the sake of movement; his haven under the blanket can no longer contain his nervous energy. "No police."

It's just as he expected. Still, there is a chance this may go south so he must tread carefully.

“Will, it’s going to be the difference between self-defense and-”

“No police,” Will repeats, turning. His eyes shine in the dim yellow light of the kitchen, fierce and resolute. “We can handle it without them.”

Hannibal is taken by his ferocity, by how easily he turns from procedure and what he’s grown up believing is moral and just. Red Riding Hood steps so readily off of the path in search of flowers, especially when the wolf wears human clothing. Still, Hannibal has his part to play. ”Will, there is a body in your freezer.”

Will lifts his chin defiantly. “I think, Dr. Lecter, that you have plenty of ideas on how to dispose of a body.”

Silence fills the kitchen as the two men regard each other. The room is quiet enough to hear the buzzing of a fruit fly by the window, so it’s certainly quiet enough to hear the truth of themselves settling between them. Will’s stance is something Hannibal can’t quite place. Half aggression, half need to run to Hannibal and shield him from the threats he perceives are now bearing down all around them.

He wonders how long Will has known. How he figured it out. He doesn’t seem surprised enough for this to be wholly new, but something in his eyes tells Hannibal that it’s fresh enough that Will doesn’t quite know how to handle it. He trembles, the sunlight coming through the window outlining his silhouette as he clenches and unclenches his fists.

One of two things is going to happen, and Hannibal is not entirely sure he’s prepared enough for either. There’s darkness in Will, enough that a dam deep inside of him could burst and let all of his pain and fear and curiosity flood out. He could realize his true place at Hannibal’s side, become the monster that Hannibal wants him to be. A thing of beauty and evil and madness.

But he might not.

Perhaps Will is just too good, too moral, to so easily step over the threshold into a world of death and blood. If that were the case Hannibal will have to kill him. He thinks of bringing Will into his arms, holding him close and kissing him softly before snapping that lovely neck. The thought of Will’s eyes going dim and his body falling lifelessly to the floor fills Hannibal with a dread he doesn’t know how to contend with.

Perhaps he could just leave. Choke Will just enough that he blacks out, which would give him enough time to get home, gather his things, and hop on a plane to Italy. Maybe Madrid, he’s always loved the crimson and gold sunsets as Spain settles in for the night. Could he live that life, though? He knows the pleasure of having Will by his side, could he live a world away knowing that his completion is wandering through life without him?

Is he damned if Will chooses justice over love?

In a slow, careful motion Hannibal extends his hands, palms up. It is placating, an olive branch, and he dearly hopes Will can't see the frantic fluttering of the pulse under the thin skin of his wrist. After a moment of studying him Will relents, the tension leaving his body as he walks over and sags into Hannibal's arms.

"That was overwhelming," he says, voice muffled in Hannibal's shirt. "I'm overwhelmed."

Hannibal leans in, pressing his lips to Will's temple and breathing him in. His heart regulates slows. "The first time often can be. Remind yourself that if you did not kill him he might have killed me. You were righteous in ending his life to protect your family."

Will releases a slow breath, shivering. "It goes beyond that. So far beyond being righteous or defensive. I...I wanted to see what would happen. I wanted to know how I would feel the moment I took his life, and what you would do once I pulled the trigger."

Hannibal can feel a thrill of triumph starting somewhere low and primal in his body. It unfurls at the base of his spine, crawling upward. "What I will do is love you no less than I did before. I daresay I love you more in this moment than I ever have, Will." He slides his hands up, cupping them under a tense jaw and tilting Will's face up. "My beautiful warrior. As cunning and ferocious as I've always known you to be."

"I want to feel like I did something wrong," Will whispers, eyes heavy lidded as they meet Hannibal's.

"And how do you feel instead?"

Will closes his eyes, lips pressed together in a thin line. Hannibal can see the emotions passing over his face, the realization, the resolution. After a moment he opens his eyes, brows knit together. "Superior."

Their mouths come together as a seal, a pact. As Hannibal kisses him he swears he can taste blood on Will's lips. Once again thoughts of devouring this sweet creature fill his head, this beautiful construct gifted to him by some brutal and blood soaked god. He would honor every piece of him, cherish him, then put him back together.

Will looks up, face soft in the hazy sunlight. "What are you going to do with Budge?"

Hannibal rests his lips against Will's temple, smiling. "I'm going to eat him."

*

As the days pass Hannibal can see Will's interest growing, his curiosity itching just under his skin. He finds more and more reasons to stumble upon Hannibal throughout the week, be it while he's finishing appointments for the day or running errands around Baltimore. It's more than a little amusing, and Hannibal turns it into a sort of tease. He'll disappear for a few hours, Will's eyes wide with wonder when he returns only to deflate when he produces simple groceries or new, uniform dishes for the dogs. Casual conversations will usually veer towards Budge or the latest disappearance as documented by Tattle Crime, but Hannibal will carefully redirect to Will's latest work or something as mundane as the weather.

Will is going stir-crazy, and Hannibal loves it. He can see how his fingers itch to explore the newfound craving settling low in his belly, but he's not sure enough to do it without Hannibal. He wants to taste, to tear, but he wants to do it with the guidance of a practiced hand and the emotional comfort of his lover beside him. How lucky for him that Hannibal is both of those things. Still, Hannibal is adamant that the moment must be right. Reckless indulgence puts everything he's worked for at risk. Beyond that, he wants to orchestrate the timing perfectly. For Will's sake.

It's a particularly nondescript Sunday evening that Will comes up from between Hannibal's thighs, panting and wiping his mouth with the back of his hand. "Good?" he murmurs, grinning as he flops on top of his lover. He looks thoroughly pleased with himself; well earned, to be completely truthful.

"Exquisite," Hannibal breathes, skin covered in a thin sheen of sweat as the tension slowly seeps from all of his muscles. Will is a pleasant weight on top of him, stretched out cat-like and nearly purring. "I would daresay you enjoy giving as much as you do receiving."

"That would be an accurate assessment," Will agrees. He rolls off of his lover, lying on his back with his hands behind his head. "You don't often lose control. I enjoy being the one to break you apart."

For the briefest moment Hannibal can hear his own sentiments spoken back to him, his innermost thoughts coming from lips that are not his own. It's almost enough to rouse him for a second round. Instead he rolls onto his side, propped up on one elbow as he draws fingertips lightly across Will's chest and ribs. "And you are the only one that can. Treasure that, my dear Will, it is a very rare gift to be given."

Will catches Hannibal's hand in his own, bringing it to his lips to kiss along his knuckles. "Still, I think there's a greater gift you can give me. Something only you can provide."

Hannibal tilts his head, studying him closely. Without speaking the words, Will asks so plainly for what he wants. "For all we know you're still in shock, Will. Shooting Budge was a traumatic event, you may not have had adequate time to process your feelings on the matter."

Will meets his eyes, clarity in his gaze. "You're wrong. For the first time in my life I know exactly how I feel about things, and what I want. It's never been so clear. More than that, I know you want to give it to me. I could see it in your eyes the night I shot Budge."

"And what did you see?" Hannibal asks, raising an eyebrow.

"Pride. Curiosity. Lust."

Though it surprises him to be so thoroughly read, he must admit that Will is not wrong. The triumph in Will's eyes from behind the smoking gun filled Hannibal with a warmth he hadn't experienced until that point. In that moment he could only see his completion, his other half standing triumphant over their prey.

Hannibal leans in, nosing along Will's jaw before stealing a kiss. "Very well, then. What would you have me do, dear Will?" He rolls on top of his lover, pressing their hips snugly

together as their talk of murder and desire stir him once more. Curious lips trail over stubble and lower, mouth closing over Will's Adam's apple and sucking. "Would you have me kill for you, all so that you may watch?" He trails back up, tracing the shell of Will's ear with his tongue before speaking again. "Or would you have me trap for you, so that you can do the real work?"

Will huffs out a breath, squirming as his spent and tender cock is coaxed back to life. "All of it. I want to experience all of it with you. Anything you want to teach me I want to learn."

Hannibal makes a thoughtful noise, slowly rolling their hips together. "There's much to learn, if you truly wish."

"I do," Will moans, bracing his heels on the bed and thrusting up. His cheeks are lovely and pink, hair already a tangled mess from their first go just a short while ago. He looks perfect. Ethereal. Hannibal wants to take his lovely, Heavenly beauty and cover it in blood.

He reaches down, gently wrapping his hand around their lengths to hold them together as he thrusts. "Everything," he breathes, face calm despite the flush of his cheeks and the ecstatic pounding of his heart. "How to hunt, how to trap. How to pull your prey apart with fingers and knives and turn them into something far more lovely than they could ever aspire to be."

"To turn them into art," Will groans, eyebrows knit. "And to consume what's left."

Hannibal goes off like a hair trigger, grunting inelegantly as he spills into his own hand. Will gasps, thrusting a few times into the sudden slickness before coming as well, Hannibal's name on his lips.

"Jesus," Will pants after a moment. "I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but their might be something wrong with us."

*

The next few weeks are surprisingly calm; it's easy for Hannibal to go about his work like he normally does, but he worries for Will's patience as they wait for the right prey to stumble into their path. He's surprised to find his lover just as collected and cool as ever.

Will shrugs when Hannibal brings it up over coffee one morning.

"It's not like we don't have other things to do," he reasons, absently petting Winston with the hand not holding his mug.

This is true. They both have their respective jobs, both have their relationship to tend to. Hannibal has a social life to maintain and dinner parties to coax Will into joining him for. Will is steadily meeting all of Hannibal's "friends" and acquaintances. It's a slow process - his anxiety and introversion keep him from attending every gathering, so he has to conserve his energy and pick and choose which events to attend. After eight months together there still seems to be no end in sight to the myriad of people he must be introduced to. He does his best, and Hannibal adores him for it, but sometimes all the socializing takes a toll on the quiet, withdrawn artist.

They certainly make sure to spend plenty of time alone together. Will can't quite convince Hannibal to go fishing with him, but he's more than happy to sit on the bank and watch the peace on Will's face as he stands waist deep in the water with a rod in his hands. There are quiet nights full of books and old movies, days spent exploring art galleries, sunny mornings in little-known cafes on the outskirts of town. Even with the quiet lust for blood under their skin, life is full and content. Happy, even.

By October Will's possessions are packed tightly into boxes and moved from Wolf Trap to Baltimore. Dogs are introduced to their new home, and a shed is built on the property to accommodate said dogs.

Will stands before it, eyebrows raised. "This isn't a shed, it's a guest house."

"Your dogs are my dogs, and my dogs do not live in squalor," Hannibal points out, chopping onions as he prepares dinner.

"It's got central AC," Will laughs. "And a heater."

"Perhaps you'd like to sleep out there with them, then," Hannibal says pointedly, raising an eyebrow. He smiles as Will laughs again, wrapping his arms around Hannibal from behind.

"What I mean to say is, thank you for caring about them," Will says, nuzzling into Hannibal's neck before pressing a light kiss against his skin. "Means a lot to me."

And that is how life progresses. Easy. Calm.

Until Hannibal comes home one night with a hungry gleam in his eyes, sweater over his arm despite the oncoming chill in the autumn air. The monster under his person suit is bristling with energy, itching to hunt. He moves straight to Will, sweeping him close and pressing their lips together firmly.

Will goes easily into his arms, a pleased noise sliding from the back of his throat. "Good day at work?"

Hannibal smirks, guiding Will backwards towards the bedroom, his grip on slim hips tight and in control. "It was fine."

"Then what is it?" Will laughs as his shirt is unbuttoned and pushed from his shoulders.

Hannibal's smile only grows, lighting his face with something Will can only place as being Faustian. "You're all settled in now. The last box has been unpacked."

"This is true…"

"And at the end of the month we will be celebrating an anniversary."

"One year," Will agrees, grinning as kisses are pressed along his jaw.

Hannibal leans closer, voice dropping to a whisper as he brings his mouth to Will's ear. His words make Will shiver; they light a fire somewhere deep inside of him that quickly

consumes him in a blaze of passion and need.

“I think we ought to throw a dinner party to celebrate.”

Chapter End Notes

Come check me out on tumblr right here!

Incisions

Chapter Summary

Will gets his hands dirty.

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warning: I know you all are ready for canon typical violence, but I wanted to throw in a quick warning for those that are needle-phobic. There's a pretty step-by-step description of a blood draw, and by step-by-step I mean I work for a blood bank and I see a lot of blood in my life.

The section begins with "Will first picks up the syringe..." and is three paragraphs long, if you wish to skip it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Now with a goal in mind, Hannibal focuses on the hunt above all else. He doesn't need to go overboard, no flashy displays of power or control this time. A body or two should do it - this is Will's first kill, he doesn't want to overcomplicate things or bring any special attention to the murder. It's far too possible that with his inexperience Will could make a fatal error and bring this all back on them, Hannibal needs to keep a tight reign over every aspect so he can make sure nothing goes wrong. The more bodies, the more difficult the clean up.

They are careful in their choosing. Not just any fool will do, not when this means so much to them. As he and Will go about their day-to-day lives they are always watching, always waiting for some deplorable excuse for a human to show themselves and seal their own fate. The moment finally comes one sunny afternoon as they sit at the dog park, settled onto a bench with coffee in hand as they watch Buster romp gleefully through piles of fallen leaves. There is one other person there, a tall man with a sad looking Australian shepherd who cowers away any time the man moves.

Will watches closely, taking in the man's body language, the dog's fear. He's been watching for quite some time now. The more he sees the angrier he looks, eyes narrow and lips pressed together in a tight line. "He beats that dog," he says under his breath, reaching over to grip Hannibal's hand tightly. "You can tell it's terrified of him, it draws back every time he crosses or uncrosses his legs."

Hannibal looks up from the paper he's been reading, arching an eyebrow as he watches. It's obvious that Will is right. The dog trembles at each miniscule movement from his owner,

watching him for direction and approval even when the man is not paying attention. While Hannibal has never felt much passion for domesticated animals, he detests men who deem themselves the alpha when they're nothing more than peacocking bullies.

"Him, then?" he asks pointedly, folding his paper and tucking it under his arm.

Will nods, eyes narrow. "And I want his dog."

Hannibal turns, surprised. "That...isn't wise, Will. It's something quite obviously linked back to him if it were to be found."

"I don't think so," Will argues, though his voice remains quiet, even. "Look at how many strays we have already, people will easily believe that we've found one more. Besides, it would be easy enough to argue that it's a different dog entirely. If he's that careless with it then I can guarantee that it's not microchipped…"

Hannibal looks away, drawing in a steadying breath. Damn those blue eyes. It's getting harder and harder to say no to his partner - in any capacity. Every inch of him knows the danger such a simple act could put them in, but the look on Will's face somehow makes such foolishness worth it. "Very well. Take Buster home. Shower, scrub every inch of your skin and shave. Find clothes you won't mind losing. I'll be home shortly."

A steady hand turns Hannibal's chin, and then soft lips are pressing against his own. Will is smiling into the kiss. Hannibal can smell the excitement starting to prick up under his skin, the traces of arousal. He smiles fondly, reaching up to twine his fingers through Will's hair. "Go, lovely boy. I'll have quite a gift for you when I return home."

*

By the time Hannibal pulls into the driveway it is well past midnight. The body is carefully tucked into his trunk, an act that feels dangerous and carefree to someone who plans every last detail of his attack. While he rarely brings bodies home it feels like a safer option this time; once again, Will is new to this. He is brilliant but unpracticed. They need time and privacy, which won't be afforded to them if they're in an easily accessed location and constantly looking over their shoulders.

With a careful glance around his lawn he slides out of the Bentley, popping the trunk and lifting it to reveal the body inside. It wasn't hard to drug the man, his body had reacted quickly to the injection and turned him to a useless, inanimate thing in Hannibal's arms. The trick had been finding the right time to strike; it had taken hours of waiting just down the street with his headlights out before his girlfriend had left for the night and all of the house lights had gone out.

The dog had been thankfully silent as Hannibal let himself in through the front door. It was a mark in its favor, the thing Hannibal dwelled on when he let the animal into the back seat of his car.

Now it peeks its head up curiously, watching as Hannibal carries the body in through the front door.

Will is standing in the foyer, a look of quiet intensity in his eyes. He's done as instructed; his skin glows pink, clean and fiercely scrubbed, face smooth and hair pushed back. He stands barefoot in simple jeans and a white undershirt. His hands open and close as if looking for something to grasp.

"The dog is in the car," Hannibal informs, easily carrying the man to the stairs leading to the basement. "Retrieve him please, I'll call you when I'm ready."

Will shoots one longing look at him before nodding, moving to do as told.

In the basement is a sterile metal table, gleaming under the light hanging above it. While it is normally reserved for preparing meat for the dinner table it will serve beautifully in this role. Dumping the man on the surface, he moves to a workbench stretching along the wall to retrieve a few items.

Everything in the drawers glisten and shine, polished and well-tended to and crying out to be put to use. Scissors. Knives. Forceps. Syringes. A beautiful library of pain and death longing to be implemented on tender flesh and viscera. He's amassed the collection over time, some purchased new and unused, some found tucked away in antique shops specializing in oddities. Each has a thousand stories to tell, some his own and some unknown to him. They are all beautiful in their own way.

With a sigh he retrieves what he needs, shutting the drawers.

Returning the unconscious figure splayed out in the middle of the room, he carefully arranges lax limbs before looping a length of cord around each one, running it under the table to secure to a sturdy leg. The last task is a piece of duct tape, tight over his mouth.

Hannibal steps back, examining the body before him. He knows that a floor above his lover waits, fire running through his veins as he anticipates the kill before him. Sweet Will. He is so fresh, so lovely. Hannibal can hardly wait to see him tear this pathetic animal apart, to bleed him and turn his body into something better. He can hardly wait to catch Will's lips over a rapidly cooling corpse, to celebrate their kill and their vitality.

Hannibal draws a breath. Now is not the time to become overly excited. There is no need to rush what lies ahead. With everything in place, he walks calmly to the top of the stairs and opens the door. Will sits on the floor just outside, knees drawn to his chest. The same look of intensity from before shadows his features.

"Are you ready, darling Will?" Hannibal asks, the slightest hint of amusement in his voice. He offers a hand, helping Will stand after he's taken it.

"Yes," Will breathes, moving close and stealing Hannibal's mouth in a desperate kiss. "So ready."

Hannibal hums against his lips, sliding warm hands down Will's sides. After a long moment he pulls away, taking Will's arm and leading him downstairs. As soon as the man is in view strong fingers tighten in Hannibal's. His entire body becomes a rigid line of excitement and tension.

“Is he dead?” he whispers, as if not trusting his voice any louder. He almost sounds disappointed by the prospect.

“Not yet, no,” Hannibal assures, touching his lower back and guiding him closer. “I wanted to leave the honor to you. He is merely unconscious, and he will remain so for some time. I believe your first time should be as smooth as possible, we will work our way up to more.”

Will gives a small nod, touching his fingertips to the cold edge of the table. “The ropes?”

“Are a precaution,” Hannibal says. He moves behind his lover, settling his hands on Will’s hips and leaning in to trail his mouth along Will’s neck. “While he is a detestable thing, we never know what extraordinary measures his body may be able to overcome. Once again, I wish to take every precaution.”

Will nods, eyes heavy lidded as he tilts his head to the side to give Hannibal more access to the pale expanse of his neck. He lifts one hand, pressing two fingers just under the man’s jaw. Taking his pulse, Hannibal notes with amusement. Once Will is assured that he is truly still breathing he draws in a shaking breath, leaning back into his partner.

“What should I do?”

Hannibal smiles, a dangerous thing as he sets his teeth into the meat of Will’s shoulder. “Whatever you like, my dear. You are the artist, where does your muse demand you go?”

Stepping away, he walks to the workbench and beckons Will closer. “Everything you need will be in here,” he instructs, smiling as Will’s eyes light up at all the possibilities laid out before him. “My only request is that you kill him quickly. If he regains consciousness and makes enough noise to be heard it will be a much harder situation to explain away. We wish to be courteous neighbors, of course.”

Will nods, licking his lips. Fingertips graze over all of the tools stretched out before him, skin brushing over polished metal and keen edges. Hannibal can feel his heart speeding up as he watches Will make his selection, a sort of fondness washing over him. This perfect creature before him - his lover, his protege - is experiencing his first steps in a world he has yet to imagine the true beauty of. If time weren’t of the essence Hannibal would pull him close, make slow, sweet love to him right there on the floor as he whispers endearments and praise with every breath.

But no, at this moment Will has a life to take.

Hannibal regains his focus, watching as Will makes his selections. Out comes a scalpel, the edge short but dangerously sharp and precise. Will breathes deep, closing his eyes and taking a steadying breath as he presses the flat of the blade to his lips. One more breath, two, three. On his fourth exhale he opens his eyes, quickly plucking a syringe from the drawer and sliding it shut.

Tilting his head, Hannibal examines his choices. “The needle?”

“You’ll see,” Will gasps, breathless and eager. He seems to float to the table, ethereal and unburdened by earthly concerns. He is the god of death, and Hannibal will worship at his feet with every last drop of blood in his body.

Leaning slightly over the body, Will bites his lip as he slices his shirt open with trembling hands. The fabric flutters open and hangs uselessly at his sides, exposing the man’s chest. He is pale, thin. His ribs jut out under his flesh, stomach hollow and caved looking. Underneath pale skin blue veins creep along, transporting blood through his body and powering his miserable existence.

Not for much longer, of course.

Will first picks up the syringe, depressing the plunger completely. Curious fingers tap along the man’s inner elbow, pressing and feeling here and there before Will apparently finds what he is looking for. Biting his lip, he carefully slides the needles in and pulls the plunger up.

It takes a few tries for him to actually find the vein and extract a bit of blood. He is always either just shy of the vein, or he goes through it, managing nothing but a few dark bruises under the skin. With a soft, frustrated sigh he tries again, this time striking just where he needs to. Dark red blood fills the barrel, swirling around until the plunger is pulled as far as it can go.

Will let’s out a breath he doesn’t seem to realize he was holding, placing the syringe next to a bound ankle.

“That will coagulate if you wait too long,” Hannibal warns, standing across from Will at the table.

Will pauses, eyes flickering back to the barrel full of blood. He chews his lip, thinking.

“Here, I’ll handle this,” Hannibal soothes, reaching over to lift the syringe. “It can be preserved.”

Will nods, a look of relief on his face. He next closes his fingers around the scalpel, trying to hide from his lover just how badly his hands shake. Thoughtful eyes rake over his possibilities. Carotid, brachial, femoral...he recites the human arteries in his head, trying to remember which are close enough to the surface to strike easily. Raising the scalpel with a shaking hand, Will swallows hard as he poises it over a slowly rising and falling chest.

A beat passes, Hannibal steps back, and then Will brings the scalpel across the man’s throat.

Hannibal’s breath catches in his chest as a bright-red fountain of arterial blood sprays out, coating everything nearby in the bright, violent redness. It is viscous, thick. He can practically taste it on his tongue as the metallic scent fills the room. With dark eyes he watches as the spray slows to a gush and then a trickle, soon dying down to a pathetic ooze as the man lays dead before them.

Standing in the wake of the carnage is Will, wide eyed, panting, and covered in blood.

Hannibal strides over quickly, careful not to slip in the puddle of blood next to the table. Strong hands cup Will's face, forcing him to meet his eyes.

"Are you alright?" he asks urgently, trying to read Will's silence. His posture is tense, the scalpel held so tight in his fingers that his knuckles are white and there will surely be indentations from the handle along his palm. He looks at Hannibal with a wild gaze, lips parted as breath rushes from his lungs in frantic gasps. Slowly, ever so slowly he raises his hands, careful of the blade as he fists the fabric of Hannibal's shirt.

"He's dead," Will gasps, licking his lips. He stops as the blood fills his mouth, pushing his tongue along the back of his teeth to chase the taste of it. His eyes flick back to Hannibal's face as he repeats, "He's dead."

Hannibal nods, brushing Will's blood-slicked hair back out of his face. "And how do you feel about it, William?" For the first time in a long while Hannibal is tense; so much rides on this moment.

Crystal blue eyes slide slowly back to the body, taking in the torn, gaping neck, the bright red mess soaking his shirt and pants and the floor below. He looks to his hands, covered as well, still holding the instrument that caused the undoing. He looks to Hannibal, a steady anchor in the stream, holding him steady as a flood of emotions wash over him.

He drops the knife, a dazed sort of smile slowly creeping onto his features. "I feel um. I feel perfect. Powerful."

Hannibal smiles, pride filling him like sand in the bottom half of an hourglass. It is slow, steady, and then suddenly he is completely full. With a pounding heart he pulls Will close, sealing their mouths together and kissing him with a barely concealed desperation. The taste of copper fills his mouth, blood smearing along his lips and chin as their tongues tangle together. "You are perfect," he affirms breathlessly, running his thumbs through the slick mess of blood on Will's cheeks. "My perfect, divine, ruthless creature. You are the art you work so diligently to create, and I love you as I have never loved until this moment."

He cannot resist touching Will everywhere, feeling his soft, perfect skin under a layer of rapidly-cooling blood. Slicking his fingers through it, he brings them to Will's lips and pushes in, moaning as Will wraps his hot tongue around the digits and sucks and licks them clean. Heat and arousal roll off of Will's skin in intoxicating waves, battling with the blood to command his senses.

"Beautiful," he whispers, removing his fingers and replacing them with his tongue. Once he has licked the taste of blood from Will's mouth he withdraws again, face smeared red. "So perfectly beautiful."

Will looks away, a blush surely forming under the mess on his face. "Jesus, Hannibal," he grins, chuckling.

Hannibal kisses him again, laughter escaping his lips. His partner, his blood-bathed love, his other-half. There is no stopping them now.

*

It takes a week for hikers to find the body, decaying in the woods well off the beaten path. The sight is grotesque enough that one of the men faints, the other frantically dialing for help as he tries not to be sick from the stench.

The body has been left on his knees, propped up so that he is eternally kneeling at the base of a large oak. His chest has been split open, heart and various organs for the most part intact within, hands sewn to his chest to appear as if he himself is tearing his skin open. A thick blindfold covers his eyes and his head is adorned with a crown seemingly made out of antlers.

His tongue has been cut out.

In no time at all the local police and FBI are crawling all over the scene, and shortly after that the crime scene photos are leaked on Tattle Crime.

Back in Baltimore Hannibal and Will swipe through the website, examining the photos and glowing with a pride that can’t be shared with anyone but the two of them. At their feet a sleeping Australian Shepherd is curled up, feet twitching as he dreams.

Chapter End Notes

Boom shaka laka!

Come find me on tumblr, I'm going through this weird Anthony Dimmond phase and I need an intervention.

Savour

Chapter Summary

Dr. Lecter hosts a dinner party.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“The beauty of serving tongue is that not many have tried it,” Hannibal says, carefully sharpening a wicked looking chef’s knife against a whetstone. “If you prepare it properly no one will ever know the source of the meat. This will save us from any unnecessary comparisons to the most recent corpse found in the woods, which will in turn save us from any unnecessary attention.”

Will sits perched on a bar stool, arms folded on the counter as he watches Hannibal work. “For two men avoiding attention this party is awfully ostentatious,” he points out, taking a long sip from the beer Hannibal has placed in front of him. His nerves are starting to get the better of him - nothing so cliche as nerves over their murder or being caught, but the simple, deep rooted fear of the public and being paraded in front of them.

“But this isn’t us swanning our kill, my dear,” Hannibal says, smiling as he glances at Will from under his eyelashes. “This is simply extending our good will to some dear friends.”

Will laughs, emptying his bottle before getting up to toss it in the recycling. “How could I possibly forget?” It’s been a day since the basement and he’s been calm, beautifully calm and soft and pliable. The night before had been a different story. With wild eyes and snarling teeth he had worked through his aggression, pressing Hannibal into the mattress and fucking into him with long, purposeful strokes until they both came, howling their triumph into the darkness. This had been before they had showered all the blood away. The mattress is a decidedly lost cause.

With the sun rose a sweet, smiling Will, content to do nothing more than lounge about with the dogs and help acclimate the newest addition to the house. Will has named him Chester, and the Shepherd has already taken to Will with bright eyes and a wagging tail.

Even now the animal sits at Will’s feet, tail thumping against the hardwood floor as he watches the men talk.

Hannibal sets his knife to the side, looking up at Will with interest. “Are you truly worried about having company tonight? I would offer you something to calm you, but I fear being under the influence of anything strong tonight may be a risk.”

Will shakes his head, grinning. “No, I’ll make it. It’s just performance anxiety, I think. You’ve had time to fashion your mask, mine is new and doesn’t quite fit just yet.”

“It will, trust me. It will fit, and it will be just as lovely as the creature who wears it.” His eyes are fond and warm as he holds Will’s gaze. It’s not until his lover colors and looks away that he laughs, returning to preparing dinner.

The guest list has been carefully constructed by Hannibal, who has taken his time and found much delight in choosing names. It reads as a “Who’s Who of the BAU.” Jack Crawford and his wife. Some psychiatrists who often help on their cases, namely Alana Bloom and Frederick Chilton. A few prominent members of society that Hannibal tends to invite to all of his dinner parties (appearing to have friends helps his facade of normalcy). Hannibal isn’t one to gloat, but if he were? These would be the people he would gloat to. Especially Crawford and Chilton, the type of men to decide themselves alphas while everyone else does all the real work around them.

Once the meat is marinating Hannibal washes his hands, walking around the bar to pull Will close and kiss him sweetly. “May I dress you tonight?”

Will slips his hands inside of Hannibal’s sweater, relishing in the warmth of his skin as he strokes his sides. “Are you trying to say I can’t dress myself?” he teases, resting his forehead against Hannibal’s.

“More or less.” Hannibal coos, stepping back as Will swats at him. “Come, let me pamper you a bit. It will help you relax before dinner.”

After a beat Will takes his hand, sliding off of the barstool and letting himself be led out of the kitchen. Hannibal laces their fingers together as they walk upstairs, stopping to strip in the bedroom before they continue on to the master bath. It’s a favorite hiding place of Will’s. He’s never been one to soak or lounge or pamper, but since meeting Hannibal he’s learned the true delight in having a sanctuary where his only concern is himself. Nothing else can reach him, not in this temple of marble surfaces and gilded fixtures.

Hannibal runs the water for a bath, adding some sort of oil that tickles Will’s nose. It smells hot, thick; like clove bud and rich honey, heady spices swirling in the steam around his head. He immediately relaxes, muscles letting go of the building tension. With a gentle wave of his hand Hannibal beckons him closer. They slide in the water together, Will’s back to Hannibal’s front.

“Is the water warm enough?” Hannibal murmurs into his hair, hands sliding over slick skin. Will nods - it’s more than warm enough, it’s damn near scalding. He loves to feel the burn seep into his skin, right down to his muscles.

From there he has no job but to relax, limp and pliable as Hannibal takes care of everything. Some high end shampoo Will’s never heard of is massaged through his scalp, followed by conditioner. It’s maybe the third time he’s ever used conditioner, if he’s being honest with himself. He sinks down so Hannibal can sluice water over him to rinse everything out, just to be brought back up so Hannibal can move on to his body.

Each touch is so careful that it verges on reverential. There's no spot on his body left untouched. From the spaces between his fingers to behind his ears, the backs of his knees to the cleft of his ass. By the time Hannibal is finished Will feels like his bones are made of jelly.

There's a shower head next to the bath's tap, Hannibal turns it on so he can rinse Will completely as the water drains. Once the ritual is complete he steps out, grabbing a plush gray towel and drying Will from head to toe.

"Better?" he asks, standing and running his thumb along Will's lower lip.

Will blinks lazily, shrugging. "I think I need a nap now."

"No time," Hannibal laughs, draping the towel around Will's shoulders and patting his thigh fondly. He dries himself before wrapping the towel around his waist, moving to the sink to shave.

With interest Will watches as he pulls out a case, opening it carefully before removing a straight razor with a handle of polished bone. Setting it on a face towel, he smooths some expensive-looking shaving lotion along his skin. Before he has time to rinse his hands Will moves over, delicately lifting the razor from the towel and carefully pulling it open. Their eyes meet as Hannibal dries his hands.

"Have you ever before?"

"Not once," Will admits.

With a look of curiosity Hannibal leans against the counter, tilting his head as he waits for Will to make a move.

The first pass of the razor is smooth. Easy enough, although Will isn't sure this will be the closest shave Hannibal's ever had. Still, the trust being handed to him is almost dizzying. He practically holds his breath as again and again he brings the razor across soft skin.

"They used to call these Cut Throat razors," Hannibal muses as Will wipes shaving lotion from the blade onto the towel.

Will looks up from under his eyelashes. "And what would you do if I cut your throat right now?"

Hannibal smiles at Will like he's the beginning and end of all things. "I would baptize you with my blood, honored to die by such a hand."

The only thing that stops Will from kissing him is the lotion on his skin and the half-finished job. He returns to the task at hand, holding the blade as if using it to worship Hannibal's neck and face. With the last pass he presses just a bit too hard, nicking Hannibal's Adam's apple.

"Self-restraint?" Hannibal asks, amused.

“No, I swear that wasn’t intentional,” Will says, laughing dazedly. Putting the razor to the side, he leans in and closes his lips over the shallow cut and sucks gently.

The coppery tang of blood hits his tongue, washing over his senses. He’s tasted blood before of course, from his own lips during school yard fist fights or split, burning cracks in his skin during the winter. His own blood doesn’t hold a candle to Hannibal’s. There’s raw power in it, it courses through his body and into Will’s mouth. The cut is shallow, so shallow that he barely gets any at all, but it’s enough.

He pulls away just to have Hannibal’s lips crash into his own, a persistent tongue pressing into his mouth to chase the taste of blood from behind his teeth. After a moment they part, panting and staring at each other wide-eyed.

“We. We need to finish getting ready,” Hannibal reminds, stealing one more kiss before tearing himself away for good.

*

The first guest arrives at five, just as specified on Hannibal’s invitation. Hannibal opens the door to Alana Bloom, looking particularly sweet and radiant in a navy blue wrap dress. She smiles a bit awkwardly, though her posture is easy.

“Am I too early?” she asks, peeking around Hannibal. “I always feel strange being the first one to show up.”

“You’re exactly on time, which means that you respect us enough to be prompt,” Hannibal assures, clasping her hand before leading her in. “Alana, you’ve met my partner Will?”

“Very briefly.” She shakes Will’s hand, and he can’t help but feel calmed by the warmth radiating from her crystal blue eyes. “At the rededication of the BAU campus library in May.”

“I remember, we spent half of the night running away from Dr. Chilton,” Will says, grinning conspiratorially. “Bonds formed in times of duress are strong bonds indeed.”

“Those bonds will be tested tonight, I hear he’s coming?” she asks, looking at Hannibal and raising an eyebrow.

Hannibal shrugs one elegant shoulder. “He makes me laugh.”

Will laughs, offering Alana his arm. “Here, let me get you a drink. I’ll try and find a wine Dr. Lecter will approve of serving tonight.” He shoots a grin at Hannibal over his shoulder before he and Alana disappear into the kitchen.

The rest of the guests arrive shortly after, mostly in a group with one or two arriving apologetically after. They all mingle in the study for a bit, drinks in hand as conversation flows freely. Bella Crawford manages to convince Hannibal to bring out his theremin to introduce everyone to the instrument. For a moment Will can’t help but blush - his last run in

with the theremin was quite some time ago and led to something much more interesting than dinner.

Perhaps not this dinner, though.

He can smell dinner roasting in the oven, the savory aroma drifting from the kitchen to tease them of what's to come. To everyone else in the room that signifies nothing special; just a lucky opportunity to experience Hannibal Lecter's culinary talents. They have absolutely no idea just what that means tonight, and it makes Will nearly giddy with delight. He feels as if he's spent so long under the thumbs of others, now he finally holds some iota of power over them. Hannibal alone shares in that power; he's the only one worthy of the knowledge.

His reverie is cut short by a firm hand clapping down on his shoulder. He jumps, turning to see Jack Crawford looming behind.

"Will," Jack says, friendly enough. Will knows that Jack is a decent man; stubborn as hell, but good, at least. Maybe in a different life they could have been friends. "It's been some time since we've seen anything new from you, any new work to show us?"

"We're afraid Dr. Lecter has been hoarding your talents, if not just your time," Frederick Chilton comments, smirking into his bourbon.

Will is torn between wanting to disappear into the wallpaper and wanting to stab that ridiculous smile right off of Chilton's face.

Before he can respond Hannibal is there, a reassuring hand touching the small of his back. "Can you blame me for wanting all of his time and attentions?" he says with an easy smile. Will can imagine the picture they paint: Hannibal in his crisp suit, a deep navy with fine gold plaid accentuating the color, Will in gray slacks and a matching waistcoat, a black tie pressed neat against a crisp white shirt (he's managed to dodge out of wearing a jacket, he doubts he'll be so lucky next time). They must look like the modern American dream, with their fine wine and fancy dinners and expensive home.

Instead they're the creeping evil. They hunt in the dark and they kill for sport. How would they look, if the outsides matched what was within? Hannibal will insist that they would be just as beautiful, perhaps even more so with their true natures revealed. All Will can imagine is pale gray skin, tangled horns, tar-black feathers…

He snaps back to the present just in time for Hannibal to usher their guests into the dining room.

His heart begins to beat frantically in his chest.

As they settle into the room he chooses his seat carefully, picking the spot closest to Hannibal and pulling out a chair for Alana to sit to his right. He likes her very well, she's bright and self-assured and seems to have a fairly good idea of what's going on at all times. Her ego is healthy and deserved, as opposed to the others choking the oxygen out of the room.

Across from him Jack settles in, a perfect vantage point to watch him eat without being apparent. Will makes a show of being the perfect host and partner, refilling wine glasses and chatting up the guests as he prays for Hannibal to return from the kitchen.

Soon enough his lover appears, plates balanced expertly on his arm. He sets a dish down in front of each guest before disappearing once more, returning with a sizzling pan held aloft. Something sweet and rich steams within, heavy with cinnamon and nutmeg.

“Pan seared pork tenderloin with a balsamic reduction and poached pears,” Hannibal informs, moving guest to guest to dish the fruit onto the plate. “I must admit I spend much of my time in the kitchen anticipating the change of the season, I have a great love of fall and winter fruits.” He sets the pan to the side, moving to take his seat next to Will. “Bon appetit.”

There is a soft rustle of movement, a gentle tinkling chime as cutlery touches fine china. Will can barely keep his hands from shaking as he lifts his own fork. The urge to stare as everyone takes their first bite is so great that he has to make a point to look away, glancing at Hannibal and flashing a swift, anxious smile before he can look back. Just across the table Jack and Bella take their first bite, faces melting into pure bliss.

“Dr. Lecter, this is...my goodness, there are hardly words,” Bella breathes, her pleasure etched into every line of her beautiful features.

“Dr. Lecter is a man of many talents,” Jack says with a smile. “We’re just lucky to be considered friends by such an amazing chef.”

Hannibal smiles, lifting his glass to acknowledge the praise. He takes a slow sip of his wine, eyes flickering over to fix on Will’s face.

Will is finally considering his own plate, taking in every aspect of the meal before him. Hannibal’s presentation alone is worthy of praise. Everything is laid out like something you’d find in a four-star restaurant, sauces artistically swept across the meat, pears stacked gracefully against each other and still letting off a rich aroma that curls up to dance around his senses. It seems almost sinful to cut into anything, but Will knows that his entire world is revolving around this moment. With trembling fingers he cuts off a small bite of meat alone, free of sauce or fruit as he brings it to his lips.

The flavor that washes across his palate is so much more than taste alone. The meat is delicate, tender. As he savors it he distinctly remembers the feel of the scalpel in his hand, can smell the rich, sticky blood on his skin and clothing as he and Hannibal devour each other in bed. He can taste the *life* he’s taken, can feel it coursing through his body and sharpening his mind.

Slowly, so slowly, he opens his eyes to find Hannibal staring at him. His lover can barely hide the hunger and pride in his gaze, eyes nearly black as he watches Will’s ecstasy.

Will wonders how he will make it through dinner.

Relief washes over him as conversation resumes, a comfortable chatter of everyone’s work lives and how they’re all holding up. Alana, Hannibal and Frederick get into a deep

discussion over some recently published article, some of Hannibal's usual crowd comparing trips they've been on in the past year. Will is able to quietly melt into the shadows. He listens, observes, but barely registers anything other than the meal before him.

It is over all too soon. Dishes are cleared and dessert is served. Dessert is consumed and wine glasses are refilled. Wine is sipped, everyone settling comfortably into their chairs as their meals settle.

Despite being absolutely terrified of public speaking, Will feels words bubbling up in his chest and begging to escape. He takes his wine glass in hand, nervously clearing his throat. His face colors as all eyes turn to him, Hannibal's eyebrows lifting in curiosity as he stares up at Will.

"I'm um...not great at this, so I'm going to be quick," he stammers, swallowing hard. "It's been a wonderful night and I appreciate all of you coming out to join us. We didn't really mention it or make a big deal, but this is a big night, it's um, one year since we first went for coffee together." A few of the older women make simpering, cooing noises. Alana smiles encouragingly, and Jack examines him with amusement. "So thank you for spending tonight with us, for being part of our lives." He turns to Hannibal drawing a deep breath. "And thank you for the last year, for everything you've done for me. For everything you've taught me, and everything we'll experience together moving forward." Though the message is unsaid, the meaning is clear. Thank you for helping me find who I truly am.

He draws another breath, raising his glass. "So, cheers. I'm going to sit down now and probably not talk for the rest of the night."

There is laughter as glasses are raised in toast. Underneath the table a strong hand takes his own, giving a firm squeeze.

Chapter End Notes

Mmm humans. Shout out to all of you lovely people who have been following and commenting since the beginning. your support and lovely words each chapter mean so so much to me!

As usual, find me on tumblr here! I also started a tumblr for my fanfic where I'll be posting previews of chapters and taking requests, follow it here!

I Don't Mind if You're Unkind

Chapter Summary

Jack comes to visit Will in the studio, and Hannibal tries to take his mind off of his stresses.

Chapter Notes

Chapter warning: Negotiated kink, choking, staged and controlled sexual violence.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sunshine streams in through Will's studio window, glittering and golden as it fills the space with light. Outside people stroll by, shopping or walking their dogs or rushing off on their way to work, but each of them with a lightness of being reserved solely for the autumn and the spring. Fall is easily Will's favorite time of year. The air outside is cool enough that he can bundle up in sweaters and flannels when he's out and about, but not so cold that he can't enjoy sitting out with the dogs in the morning to watch them romp around their backyard. Hannibal barely leaves the kitchen, making all sorts of sumptuous soups and stews for them to share at the smaller table in the breakfast nook. There's no need for the formal dining room; it's too nice out to not cozy up together, to not casually touch their feet and fingertips as they eat next to the large bay window that looks into the front lawn.

Beyond that, his creativity is flowing out of him in so many new and exciting ways. The world has opened up before him ever since the night in the basement; he feels parts of his brain that he's barely ever used clicking and turning and groaning to life. He wants to dive into his supplies, to go to that dark space he was in while looming over that harsh, cold table, and *create*.

It doesn't hurt that he has new mediums to work with. Sitting next to him, thick and red, is the blood he has drawn from his very first victim.

Thanks to Hannibal it's just as sweet and ruby red as it was fresh out of the vein. He apparently added some chemical to it, some anticoagulant to keep it in liquid form instead of clumping into a solid in the vial. It flows glossy and smooth, thick and inviting. Will has to resist the urge to dip his fingers right in and bring them to his lips to suck clean of the coppery taste. He wants to rub it across his skin. To bathe in it like Elizabeth Bathory, young and powerful and beautiful forever.

But the clean up in that sounds atrocious, so he's going to paint with it instead.

He's not the first person to try this, not at all. There's some artist in Manhattan that he's heard of that uses his own blood, drawn fresh from his arm and put straight to the canvas. It's a great idea, putting a piece of yourself into your work like that. Will's done it with his hair plenty of times. But this, using blood taken by force, it feels a million times more powerful.

He clicks the tip of his paintbrush against his teeth. Every muscle in his body stills in anticipation, the blank canvas sitting in front of him like a promise. Slowly, reverently, he opens the vial and dips his brush inside.

It always surprises him how thick blood is. It dips around his brush slick and viscous, fat drops falling as it's lifted from the container. He's careful to tap the excess against the rim before bringing it to the canvas.

His first stroke is slow, sacred. The line he paints starts out a deep rich red, but quickly it oxidizes into a rust-like brown that sits lightly on the page. Another stroke deepens the color, the layers working together for a more opacity.

A few more strokes and Will realizes he's been holding his breath.

He wants to call Hannibal, to try and put words to what he's feeling right now. It goes so far beyond excitement. He's filled with gratitude, his admiration for the man who made this possible brimming within him like an overflowing cup. He reaches for his phone, about to dial the number when his studio door opens behind him.

He drops the paintbrush and the phone at the same time. He worries more for one than the other, but tries not to show it as Jack Crawford walks into his space.

For a moment his heart speeds up but he manages to quickly remind himself that he knows the man outside of his position at the BAU. Will forces a smile as he calmly retrieves his things from the ground.

"Jack. Did I forget we were meeting today or…?"

Jack laughs, taking his jacket off and folding it over his arm. He's dressed in his usual smartly pressed suit, hat settled squarely over his graying hair. "No, no. I'm sorry to burst in on you like this, but I checked for you at home and Dr. Lecter told me you'd be here."

"Can't really choose when inspiration strikes," Will says, managing an awkward chuckle. "We have dinner plans tonight, I wanted to get some work done before I need to start getting ready."

"He mentioned. He had particular interest in you being home by four-thirty, he may have asked me to pass that message on," Jack says, raising an eyebrow. "Actually first he asked if I could handcuff you and bring you back to the house by four-thirty, I told him I didn't have any cuffs on me."

Will snorts, grinning. "You're late once, and you never hear the end of it. Anyway, what can I do for you?"

Jack does a slow walk-around of the studio, taking in the pieces Will's working on around the space. Various paintings and sculptures lay half-finished at his work stations, though few look near-enough to completion. In the corner is what appears to be a crib made entirely out of bone; Jack stops short, shooting a pointed look over his shoulder.

"It's going to have a mobile made of baby teeth hanging over it," Will says, arms folded.

"That's pretty dark."

"I'm pretty dark."

"That's true. And actually why I've come to see you. Have you been reading up on the Chesapeake Ripper at all?" Jack asks, tucking his hands in his pockets as he turns to face Will.

Will nods, shrugging. "Hard to avoid him, really. It's all over the news and social media. I'm not going to lie, I went to Tattle Crime to check out the crime scene photos. They're...pretty wild."

"They are," Jack agrees. "And they're the reason I'm here. Remember when you helped us on the Chapel murders?"

Will remembers it well. A killer had been skulking around Maine killing families and fixing their bodies into scenes of well known religious paintings, their bodies on display in churches and chapels around the state. Will had been brought in to shed light onto the pieces they were replicating. In the end the killer was caught by some DNA he left at one of the scenes, and Will got nothing from it but eight solid months of useless nightmares.

"I do," he says, jaw tense. He hadn't wanted to help. He'd met Jack at a museum opening, apparently that was enough of an introduction for Jack to strong arm him into helping with the case.

"Well, we could use you again," Jack says, face resolute. "To be completely honest some of these pieces look like the work you produce. Either the killer is specifically trying to replicate you, or there's some sort of message that you might be able to help us decode."

Jack's sentence sounds almost unfinished. Will tries not to think too deeply on that. Instead he takes a turn around the studio, straightening out his supplies and tools as he thinks. He has to play this carefully. Getting too close to a murder he himself committed sounds dangerous, but turning Jack down might make the agent curious over his reluctance.

"You think it looks like my work?" Will asks, trying to sound offended.

Jack holds up his hands placatingly. "In a way. The killer brings in some animal elements to their pieces."

Will feels an acute longing for Hannibal, for his counsel. He'd know how to play this.

"I'm sorry Jack, I can't help you," he says after a long moment, voice flat.

Jack frowns, eyebrows knit. “I’m sorry?”

“I can’t,” Will repeats, trying to sound firm. “Last time you pulled me into a case it...it messed me up for a long time after. It was a year before I could sleep through the night without waking up in a cold sweat. I’ve got good things going for me right now, between work and my relationship. I can’t risk my mental health, not when everything is going so well.”

“Will, people are dying,” Jack says firmly, stepping forward. “You could help us prevent that from happening.”

“And so can people who are trained for that sort of thing,” Will argues. “The answer is no, Jack.”

Jack shakes his head, folding his arms across his chest. “I want you to think about this. Talk to Hannibal. Or let me, I don’t care. I’ll talk to him and we’ll reconvene later.”

Will snorts, looking at him in disbelief. “Hannibal isn’t my keeper, Jack. He’s not going to force me to do something, even if he *does* think I should. You don’t need to go ask permission to use me like a flashlight or a screwdriver or something. You’re not asking to borrow his leaf blower. If anything he’d find it terribly rude.”

“We’ll see,” Jack says, face impassive. “I’ll give you until Friday to think about it. Enjoy your night out, Will.” With that he turns on his heel, striding out of the studio and letting the door snap shut behind him.

*

“He said he was going to come to me about the issue?”

Will sighs, letting the hiss of the shower head surround him as he steps fully under the stream. Water cascades over his hair and down his back, striking the tile like raindrops against a window pane. *Tap tap tap.* “Yeah. I told him you’d find it rude that he didn’t take me seriously.”

“I would find it sensationally rude,” Hannibal agrees. He’s leaning against the counter, having followed Will in when he noticed his anxiety upon returning home. “I would assume he is aware that I’m not your keeper, and that I do not wish to force you into situations you haven’t agreed to.”

“You’d think so,” Will snorts. His head is swimming. His entire body aches. The stress and panic of the earlier conversation cling to him like white noise, crackling and popping over his skin. “Then he told me to enjoy dinner with the most sarcasm he could muster. Bastard.”

“He can be entirely unpleasant, although I do assume it is a side-effect of the job. If he does come to me I’ll remind him that you are in fact a grown man capable of making the best decisions for yourself.”

Will grins, tilting his head back and letting the water run down his chest. “Or you can play along, tell him you absolutely forbid it. My job is to keep your home and care for your children.”

Hannibal laughs, the sound followed by a soft susurrus of fabric. “Shall I tell him I’ve decided to keep you locked in a tower so that no other eyes may look on you?” The shower door slides open, and soon there is a warm body pressing up behind Will. “If I am being honest with you, the idea of it is appealing. Having you all to myself, untouched by the rest of the world…” Hannibal slides his hands along Will’s sides, stroking low across his belly and down his hips. Warm lips press to Will’s neck, a gentle kiss over the fluttering of his pulse.

“Can I still paint?” Will asks with a smile, leaning back into Hannibal’s firm chest. “Will there be books to keep me entertained?”

“As many books as you desire,” Hannibal promises, voice a low rumble in his chest as he brings his hands up to tease Will’s nipples. The soft pink flesh firms under his touch, a breathy sigh falling from Will’s lips.

“And will you promise to visit me every night?”

Hannibal’s laughter is deep, dark. “You will never be rid of me, lovely boy.”

Will looks over his shoulder as best he can, moaning softly as Hannibal’s mouth descends upon his own. The kisses are short but hungry, like strikes of lightning against his lips. Hannibal’s hand comes up to wrap lightly around Will’s neck, the barest hint of pressure as their tongues tangle together.

Will pulls away after a moment, panting. “Should we dry off and move to the bed?”

“No,” Hannibal purrs, one arm across Will’s chest to keep him close. “I quite like you wet and desperate.” The hand barring Will from moving slips down, gently taking Will’s half-hard cock in hand and giving a few loving strokes. “And you moan so prettily for me, I find it echoes beautifully off of the shower walls…”

A breathless laugh seems to punch it’s way from Will’s chest, light and airy as he rocks back into Hannibal’s body. “We’re going to slip, I’m going to break my neck.”

“I would never let anything happen to you,” Hannibal swears, lightly squeezing the base of Will’s cock. When his lover is fully hard and aching his length curves beautifully towards his stomach, the tip flushed and pink and desperate for touch. It is art in itself, the truest beauty nature has ever been able to create. With a reverent sigh Hannibal rests his chin on Will’s shoulder, looking down at the swollen length as he cups Will’s balls and rolls them gently in his hand.

“You have very talented hands, Dr. Lecter,” Will chokes, arching into the touch.

Hannibal smiles and bites gently at Will’s neck. “Quite the compliment from an artist such as yourself.” Two fingers stroke lightly at his perineum before moving back to his leaking cock.

The hand over his throat twitches gently, Hannibal's thumb stroking lightly over his pulse.

Will swallows hard, the movement felt under Hannibal's palm. He pushes forward, pressing his neck into Hannibal's grasp. "Do it…"

Hannibal's own length twitches at the thought, feeling his lust burning throughout his body. "Are you sure, Will?" he breathes, eyes heavy lidded. They've only tried it once before, and while the result was a success he hasn't wanted to push it too soon.

"I'm sure," Will groans, rubbing his ass back against Hannibal's cock as he squirms in his grasp.

Hannibal licks his lips, a dark, violent hunger snapping it's teeth deep within him. "Very well," he pants, stroking over Will's chest before bringing his hand back up. "If you wish for me to stop hold up two fingers."

Will nods, chest heaving as he flashes a lazy hand sign to show his compliance.

A hungry sort of snarl rips itself from Hannibal's throat as he strokes firmly along Will's dick, milking the thick, clear precome from the tip as he tries to gather his control. He barely comes close before he tightens his fingers around Will's throat, squeezing his windpipe.

The effect is immediate. Will goes still for a moment under his touch, body rigid before his hands scrabble up to claw at Hannibal's fingers. His hips pick up speed as he tries to choke in a breath, fucking desperately into the fist circling his length. Hannibal let's him struggle for a moment before letting go, listening with relish as Will sucks in a few gasping breaths.

"Alright?" Hannibal asks, voice almost pained from the overwhelming power of his arousal. "You were fighting me, are you alright?"

Will leans back bonelessly as he continues to catch his breath, hips slowing to a roll. "Mhm," he hums, smiling lazily. "I like to fight you."

"I am aware, stubborn boy," Hannibal mutters, drawing his thumb over Will's leaking tip. "Ready?"

"God yes," Will pants, nodding frantically.

Before he can finish the motion Hannibal squeezes again, this time tighter than before. Will's body once again reacts like a live wire, jumping into the touch as he squirms and struggles in Hannibal's grasp.

Hannibal leans in, drawing his tongue flat along Will's jaw. "Be still, or I'll let you black out," he growls, biting viciously just behind his ear. Will gives a pathetic, strangled moan, doing his best to hold still despite the subconscious urge to fight for air.

"Good boy," Hannibal purrs, giving long, twisting strokes along his length. He strokes up to rub his fingertips lightly over the glans before sliding back down to squeeze and stroke the base. "Be sweet, don't fight me and I'll let you come."

He closely watches the way Will's skin turns pink and then red over his cheeks, watches the way his eyes begin to water as he tries to stay calm. Any time it seems like too much he lets up ever so slightly, letting Will force oxygen into his lungs before the ability is taken away once more.

After another few sweet breaths he grabs Will firmly, turning his body and forcing his back to the wall. He steals a vicious kiss, pressing a smile against Will's lips. "Are you ready to come?" he asks, voice sweet and dangerously sympathetic. "Shall I give you what you need?"

Will is a panting, pathetic mess, skin red and eyes glassy as he nods. He's still too invested in catching his breath to bother with words. Instead he grips at Hannibal's shoulders, trying to pull him closer.

Hannibal obliges, using his body to hold Will to the wall as he regains his position of control. Left hand pressed to Will's throat, right hand working his length, he leans in and whispers, "I won't let you breath until you come."

Will whines, looking vaguely panicked at the thought. His palms press flat to the tile, fingers scrabbling at the wall as he thrusts helplessly into Hannibal's controlled grip. The fingers on his throat are firm, insistent. He can tell by the look in Hannibal's eyes that he's entirely serious.

Hannibal watches with a ravenous expression as Will works himself towards completion, curious as to how far his lover will go before he has to tap out. It's not that he tries to push Will to safe words or signals, he certainly doesn't; but sometimes Will pushes himself, desperate to come as close to the edge as he can without falling over.

He takes pity, helping his lover along. With each pull to the tip he tightens his hand, sliding his thumb along the underside with each stroke to the base. A leg presses firmly between Will's own, giving him something to rut and press against as he gets closer and closer to completion. Will's skin is a violent red and his eyes flutter helplessly as he pushes for his climax, yet still he does not lift his hand for mercy.

For a moment Hannibal fears he will have to give in before Will does.

Just before that comes to pass Will's eyes roll up, a soft, helpless noise escaping his lips as he spills into Hannibal's hand. Hannibal releases Will's throat and catches him easily as he slumps forward, trembling violently.

"Strong, beautiful thing," Hannibal whispers, stroking Will's wet hair as he coughs and groans and gasps for air. "Foolish, reckless boy."

Will does not speak. He simply leans into the strength of his lover, head spinning as his blood pounds through his body, restoring oxygen to his brain.

Before he is fully recovered he slides bonelessly to the tile floor, leaning in and nuzzling his face into the thick curls at the base of Hannibal's shaft. Hannibal clucks his tongue, stroking curls off of his forehead. "Greedy thing, I just gave you your own release and now you want

mine as well?" he teases, smiling. Will can only laugh, tilting his head up and closing his eyes.

Hannibal takes the hint, taking his own cock in hand and stroking firmly. He doubts this will take long, not after seeing Will so undone. Not after seeing such a powerful thing stripped of all of his strength and agency.

As if reading his mind Will leans in a bit more, opening his mouth and moaning softly.

Seeing him so subjugated tips Hannibal over. With a gasp he comes, spilling onto Will's tongue and chin as he fucks into his own hand. Will squirms at the attention, pushing up farther onto his knees to accept what he's given.

Soon they are both spent and the water is cold around them.

Hannibal kneels, wrapping his arms around Will and helping him stand. He lets the frigid water wash over them, rinsing away any evidence of their exploits.

"I'll deal with Jack," he whispers into Will's temple. "I'll deal with everything."

*

"Thank you Dr. Lecter, I'll be sure to make that phone call."

Hannibal smiles, opening the door for his patient as she collects her purse. "Please do. I'll be waiting to hear about it at our session next week." She smiles and nods, and just as Hannibal goes to shut the door he hears her gasp, "Oh, pardon me!"

"No, no, pardon me, I think I'm at the wrong entrance," Jack Crawford says from the other side of the door, friendly and warm. "Have a great day."

Hannibal opens the door once again, frowning. "Detective Crawford. I believe I've told you before that this is a private exit for my patients."

"I apologize Dr. Lecter," Jack says with a casual smile, strolling in without invitation. "I assumed it would be better to come in the back way, so as not to alarm any patients who might be showing up for their appointments. Is there any chance I can steal a moment of your time?"

Hannibal raises an eyebrow, checking his watch. "I have fifteen minutes until my next client arrives."

"I only need five," Jack assures him. "I assume Will told you I visited him at the studio?"

Hannibal nods, hands clasped behind his back. "He did. He was rather upset that you refused to take his word as law, and even more so that you seem to think I'm his keeper rather than his partner."

"Oh no, it's not like that at all," Jack says quickly. "I just feel like you can help put his mind at ease. Will was in a very different place last time he worked with me, much more skittish

and withdrawn. I could see how back then the case would have weighed heavily on his mind."

"And what makes you think now would be any different?" Hannibal asks pointedly.

Jack smiles, tucking his hands in his pockets. "To be honest? You. Will has stability now, a comfortable home and a loving family to come home to. He won't be floating alone in the darkness." Jack shrugs, sighing. "Maybe it's just me...but he seems like a different man now. More confident. More grounded. Don't you see it too?"

Hannibal purses his lips. "I try not to psychoanalyze my partner."

"No, no, I wouldn't think so," Jack assures. "Maybe I see it because I'm not exposed to him every day. I just know he can make a difference, save countless lives. Don't you agree?"

Hannibal is silent, turning thoughts over in his head as he paces to his desk. He wants to tell Jack exactly where to stick his smug self-assurance, but the facade of impeccable manners has always been of the utmost importance to him. He needs to find a way to be calm and polite while firmly turning the detective away for good.

He opens his mouth to speak, but pauses on the thought. When he turns it is with a different light in his eyes. "I'll speak to Will, see what I can do," Hannibal says, offering a small smile.

Jack looks up, stunned. "Really?"

Hannibal smiles warmly, nodding. "I'm sure he dearly wants to help. He's struggled with his mental health in the past and I intend to help him understand that his life is different now. Let me see what I can do, I'll ring you later in the week."

"Dr. Lecter once again you're my hero," Jack says, shaking his hand firmly. "I don't know what I'd do without you."

"Please, none of that," Hannibal insists. "Now if you'll allow me to prepare for my next session…"

"Oh, absolutely," Jack says quickly, returning his hat to his head. "I'll talk to you later this week, Dr. Lecter."

Hannibal nods, an amused smile playing on his lips as he watches Jack go. "Until then, agent Crawford."

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry Jesus.

Tumblr here.

Take Me to Church

Chapter Summary

Everyone has questions. Will has answers.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"There is absolutely no way in hell, Hannibal."

They stand squared off in Hannibal's office, postures contrary and off-balance. Hannibal is as cool and calm as he always is. He leans against his desk, eyebrows raised, palms resting lightly on the wooden surface as he listens to Will rage and rail and defy any semblance of sense Hannibal may approach him with. The good doctor's head is cocked lightly to the side, thinly veiled amusement etched into his features.

Will on the other hand is a caged animal. Shoes tapping lightly against the polished wood floor, he paces back and forth with crossed arms as words tumble out of his mouth. His eyes are bright, wild. He tries to keep his chin raised in defiance, but every now and then his posture will crumple and he'll draw in on himself as a last-ditch means of protection.

Hannibal raises his palms in an attempt to calm his lover. "I merely suggest that it might be wise to keep a close eye on Agent Crawford. He's taken a personal interest in the case, Will. He is stubborn. He takes these things as a personal insult and doesn't rest until he's caught the one he imagines has slighted him. If you're close enough you can lead him in the wrong direction, dictate what he thinks he knows."

Will shakes his head firmly, working his jaw as he takes another turn around the room. "I'm not putting myself in that position, Hannibal. I have a hard time forcing myself into genuine interactions, how the hell am I supposed to keep up a facade that's so important?"

A sigh slips from Hannibal's lips as he reaches out to Will. "Do stop pacing love, you're going to wear a track into my floor. Come."

Will stops, looking over warily as he shifts from foot to foot.

"Come," Hannibal repeats, firmer but still kind.

This time Will relents. His shoulders sag, posture becoming muted and docile as he walks closer to Hannibal. He seems reluctant to settle into Hannibal's arms. With a sigh his lover tries to gentle him, stroking his hair, rubbing down his sides, running a firm palm along his back. Gentle. Firm. Like he's soothing a wild horse. After a long moment Will melts, sinking into the attention.

“I can’t do this, Hannibal,” he breathes. “Don’t ask me to do this.”

Hannibal frowns, gently tilting Will’s head up so that their eyes are forced to meet. “What is this ‘can’t,’ hm?” He asks, stroking his knuckles gently along Will’s jaw. “You are more powerful than you think, William. I’ve seen it myself. Seen you grow in ways neither of us could ever imagine, and all in such a short period of time.” Leaning in, he lets parted lips brush together in the barest whisper of a kiss. “You’ve found your power and your control over the dead, it’s time you took your place above the living as well.” Sure fingers tug at a curl, pulling it straight before letting it bounce back into place. “They are animals, Will. Waiting to be herded. I’ve known this all my life, and now that you understand it as well I’m filled with such possibility and hope for the future. Life is limitless with you by my side. I intend for you to understand that.”

And just like that, Will molds like wet clay under sure fingers. He pulls back, looking dazed as he meets Hannibal’s eyes.

“I can’t manipulate them like you can, Hannibal. Like you manipulate me.”

Hannibal’s smile is warm, Will’s words washing warm over him like fond praise. “Then don’t manipulate them as I do you. Manipulate them as you manipulate me. With your beauty, and your darkness, and your appetite and desire for brutality.”

Letting Hannibal guide him into another kiss, Will lets Hannibal’s words sink in. A thought occurs to him, lips curving into a smile almost childlike in its excitement. “Fine. I want it to be a game, though. I want to be surprised. You leave me the bodies, I only want to see them as a crime scene.”

Hannibal draws back, for once caught off guard but utterly delighted. “Like love letters.”

“Like love letters,” Will agrees. He finds himself swept into a tighter embrace, feeling Hannibal’s heart race against his own as his lover laughs.

“Oh, the gifts I will give you…”

*

That night Hannibal goes hunting.

*

“Can’t say I’m thrilled about the circumstances, but it really is good to see you again Will.”

A slim woman with raven hair and sparkling eyes meets Will when he pulls up to the crime scene.

“Beverly.” Will flashes a genuine smile, waving his hand in greeting to cut off her opportunity to pull him in for a hug. “It’s good to see you. Jack here yet?”

“He called ahead to say he’ll be here in ten or so, he got caught up at the office.” She lifts the police tape so he can step under, leading him across a thick lawn and into the church looming

before them. “Brian and Jimmy are in there taking photos, we’ll be your forensics team on the case.”

Will snorts as they walk through the sprawling lobby, eyes darting around to take in the high, arching ceilings and austere decor. It’s a Catholic church; it *feels* like a Catholic church. The saints and apostles carved into the wall seem to stare right through them, a look of thinly veiled judgement permanently etched onto their faces. The wallpaper looks like he hasn’t been redone since about nineteen-sixty. “They still think no one knows they’re together?”

Beverly grins, nodding. “It’s great. I think Jack goes along with it just so he doesn’t have to fill out the HR paperwork.”

“Sounds like Jack,” Will agrees. “Am I good to go in, or should I wait until someone comes out to get me?”

Beverly shrugs. “Crime scene is pretty localized to the front of the chapel, you should be fine. I’ll join you in a bit. I need to call the lab back, they were running some prints for us on a different case.” She gives a short wave before setting off to find a quiet place to make her phone call.

Will watches her walk away before turning to the doors that lead into the sanctuary. They’re heavy and wooden, and from beyond he can hear the echo of loud voices shouting to each other from various places in the room. With a deep breath to calm his pounding heart he walks inside.

The first thing he notices is the smell of flowers. It hits him sweet and thick, the perfume settling heavy in the cool, damp air of the church. The ceilings seem impossibly high as he looks up. Skylights let in slices of sunshine, glaringly bright in the noon sky. Everyone has gone quiet as he walks in. It feels surreal, almost as if he’s walking through the haze of a dream. He looks down and sees the source of the scent; strewn along the center aisle is a blanket of flowers, nearly enough to carpet the floor entirely.

Brian Zeller walks up behind him, camera held in his hands. “A couple of different kinds here. Honeysuckle, alstroemeria, belladonna. At the end of the aisle there are a few sprigs of stephanotis, concentrated just in that area.”

“Beauty, death and devotion. Somebody’s got a crush.”

Will looks around for the source of the second voice, eyes drawing up to where Jimmy Price leans over a balcony above him. “Hi Will,” he grins, giving a small wave of a purple nitrile-gloved hand.

“Jimmy,” he says with a nod. “They’re all just in this one aisle?”

“Yep,” Jimmy calls down, looking out over the space below him. “He made a runner of flowers leading up to the main event.”

Will brings his eyes back down, gasping as he spots what lies at the front of the chapel.

It's a human heart. Looks like one, at least. Quite large in size, maybe about four feet tall and three feet across, sculpted carefully so as to be as anatomically accurate as possible. It has each aorta, each ventricle, each vein, the striations of muscle. Hannibal has outdone Will with his artistry. He has left Will his beating heart in vivid realness, presented to him in the hazy dreamlike setting of this flowering paradise.

"Do you need a moment alone with it?" Brian asks seriously, raising an eyebrow.

Jack Crawford strides in, pulling his black leather gloves off and tucking them into his pocket. "No, he doesn't. What do we know so far Zee?"

"Not much," Brian admits. "There are no teeth and no fingers to print, so we're trying to ID the body still. He uh...essentially bent his victim into the shape, peeled his skin open, sewed it back together to create...whatever the hell this is."

Jack's eyes are narrow as he studies the room. "Will. What is this supposed to mean?"

Will feels dizzy, taking it all in. He can practically see the heart beating as he slowly walks down the aisle, can see blood spilling from each ventricle as it pumps in front of him. The flowers create a soft, spongy carpet below his feet, each press of his shoes crushing the petals and releasing another wave of their cloying odor. When he reaches the pulpit it's hard not to reach out and touch the body.

In his mind he can see Hannibal leaning over the work table in the basement, calm and loving as he cuts and carves and rebuilds. He can hear the snapping of bones, the wet sound of skin being peeled back. He can imagine Hannibal standing before the finished piece, full of love and devotion and excitement for Will to see his handiwork.

"It's a proposal," he breathes.

Jack walks up to join him, folding his arms. "How? And to whom? Are you saying we have two suspects to look for?"

Will shakes his head, swallowing hard. "No, just one I think. Though the intended recipient could very well know the nature of the killer. It's so blatant. They've literally given their heart as brutally and as bloodily as they know how."

"This is supposed to be romance?" Jimmy asks, pulling a face as he goes to join them on the ground level. "What ever happened to a nice dinner out, or proposing over the kiss cam at a football game?"

"That's not him, not this killer," Will says, laughing softly. "He's not a football type of man, believe me. He knows flower language, I doubt he spends his weekends in crowds of sweating sports fans. He's different. Elegent. He's not going to settle for the usual proposal. He intends for it to be grand, inescapable. He wants his message to be clear and unavoidable."

Brian bites his lip, worrying it between his teeth. "But why a proposal? Can't it just be a gesture of love or courtship or something?"

In answer Will stoops, picking up a soft white flower with pointed petals and handing it to Brian. “He created a path down the aisle to his heart, with these guys at the end. Stephanotis. They’re common in bridal bouquets, they represent married bliss.”

“That is...messed up,” Brian says, dropping the flower and wiping his hand on his jeans.

Will looks at the heart, hoping his smile looks disbelieving rather than fond. “It’s a little heavy handed,” he murmurs, heart squeezing like it’s trapped in a vice. His stomach flips, head swimming at the question laid out before him. “The question now, is what answer is he going to get?”

*

When Will gets home his pack of dogs immediately runs up to greet him, barking and whining and struggling to get close enough to sniff his hands for treats or affection. They look so different now. Hannibal is like clockwork when it comes to having them groomed and cared for. His once rangy pack of mutts look impeccable and clean, like the house they now reside in.

He draws in a breath, head still spinning with the question that’s been laid out before him. He knows he needs to find Hannibal despite the strong urge to run and hide upstairs in their bathroom until he’s had some time to himself. He manages to move forward, one step after another as he heads into the kitchen.

Hannibal stands at the counter, somehow even more handsome than usual. His steel gray shirt fits beautifully, top button undone and sleeves rolled up to the elbow. His apron is tied neatly around his waist to protect his slacks from any potential spills, and his hair is beginning to fall from it’s usual place, slicked back and neat. When he notices Will he looks up, smiling.

“And how was work today, my dear?”

Will can’t help but return the smile, the fluttering feeling in his stomach calming immediately. “It was interesting. Quite the crime scene.”

Hannibal sets his knife down, smirking. “Oh? I would love to hear about it.”

Will sets his messenger on the kitchen table, sliding out of his jacket and hanging it over a chair. “It was quite the declaration of love. Seems like the suspect left some unknown accomplice his beating heart, carved out of the body of someone he deemed unworthy of his lover. So he changed him. Made him better.”

Hannibal’s eyes sparkle with unspoken mirth. “Sounds like quite the effect.”

“Oh it was. Set up at the pulpit of a cathedral, I’m shocked there wasn’t a priest behind it to perform the marriage rites, it was that blatant.” Will kneels down, patting Buster’s chubby flank when the dog waddles up to him. “He’s trying to secure his mate, his partner. There were flowers everywhere, specific ones that sent a pretty clear message. It was a proposal.”

When he stands up there is a small black box on the counter in front of him, velvet and just the right size to fit in the palm of his hand. Hannibal has gone back to chopping carrots, blessedly not forcing Will into eye contact.

“I will save you the humiliation of getting down on one knee,” he says, smiling warmly. “I know you wouldn’t prefer that sort of attention. I intend to have you for the rest of my life, Will, legally as well as emotionally.”

Will slowly picks up the box, prying is open. Sitting on a cushion of soft white satin is a ring, a wide, flat band of platinum with no ostentatious stones or embellishments. Simple and neat and straight-forward.

“It was hard not to choose something a bit more...expensive,” Hannibal admits. “But with your work I know any stones or designs might be marred, and I don’t quite like the idea of you taking it off to sculpt.”

Will picks it up, biting his lip. “Am I taking your last name?”

“Well, mine holds more meaning to me than yours to you,” Hannibal says reasonably. “You never had a close relationship with your father or grandfather. My name and my title are my birthright and mine to pass on.”

Will nods. “Makes sense. Do we have to have a huge wedding?”

Hannibal looks up, considering. “There are certainly people I would invite, if only for the sake of keeping up appearances. I’m sure we could keep it fairly small though.”

“I don’t really have anyone to invite anyway,” Will chuckles. He plucks up the ring, sliding it slowly onto his finger. “Pick out my suit and tell me what time to be ready, you’ll handle the rest?”

Hannibal laughs. “Darling, I adore you and your aesthetic is leagues above that of anyone else. That being said, I could not let myself trust you with tastings or invitations or anything of the sort. Not if I wanted things to get done in time without either of us getting married in flannel.”

Will laughs, blushing as Hannibal’s eyes return again and again to the ring on his finger. “Alright. Yeah, yes. Let’s get married.”

He knows what this is, knows that it is ownership. For some reason he’s alright with it.

Chapter End Notes

Gosh this was a rushed chapter, I'm so sorry! It's Fannibal appreciation day, did you know that? I did not until a few hours ago. Let me just say that I appreciate every single one of you that has given your time to read this, whether you've been here from chapter

one or whether this is your first time finding the story. I've been in plenty of fandoms, but none have become the family that this one has for me. Thank you for giving me an outlet to explore my writing and thank you for your comments and concrit, your kudos and your shares. You're all the very best. <3

Tumblr here, we should totally be friends since I love you all!

Until Death Do Us Part

Chapter Summary

A flurry of activity, and a wedding.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They're tied together, but it's all off balance. It's all wrong. He can feel the rope cutting into his windpipe and the coarse fibers digging into his skin just as he can see it coiled tight around Hannibal's own neck. Hannibal's face is far too calm for how precarious everything is, how close they are to being snared. He watches as if waiting to see what Will does with the knowledge in front of him. While he stands in stoic-stillness Will twists and writhes, trying to gain his balance on the chair underneath him.

But it's not right. It's uneven.

Because every time he struggles, every time he pulls at the rope to free himself, he can see it pull tighter around Hannibal's neck. With a curious look Hannibal reaches up, giving a tug and watching with growing interest as Will finds himself drawn up and unable to breathe.

If one fights the other is doomed. If they stay still they will be safe enough for the moment, but unable to move forward or back. Stagnant.

The only hope is to jump together.

Will can see the knowledge light Hannibal's eyes just as it dawns across his own mind. There is no need for communication, no need to confirm what they both know. *If you jump, I jump.* With a breath and a slightly delirious smile Will falls forward just as Hannibal steps off of his own chair, the ropes snapping taut as they plunge together.

Will jerks awake with a shout, drenched in sweat and chest heaving as he struggles for air. Next to him Hannibal stirs and sits, a look of concern on his face as he reaches to turn a light on. "Are you alright?" he asks, accent thick and sluggish with sleep. "Another nightmare?"

Will shivers, a trickle of sweat dripping from his hairline and sliding down the back of his neck. "Mm," he hums, the best response he can manage for the moment. He is drenched, white undershirt sticking to his chest and back as he tries to clear his brain of the fog of sleep. He is trembling slightly, eyes glassy and unfocused as he stares forward.

"Come, drink,' Hannibal murmurs, plucking up a water glass from the nightstand and pressing it to Will's lips. After a few careful sips he returns it to the bedside table. "Do you want to tell me about it?"

A full body shudder violently tears through Will's body, taking a long moment to subside. Will finally turns to him, managing to look weary and wired all at once. "It was strange. We sacrificed ourselves for each other, it was like we knew there was no other way. No way out of what we were tangled up in. So instead of fighting fate or turning on each other we just...fell together."

Hannibal turns towards him, carefully peeling Will's sweat-soaked shirt off and tossing it into the hamper. "That does not sound so dire," he soothes, stroking Will's hair back off of his forehead. He presses him back down to the mattress, rubbing gentle circles over Will's chest and stomach. "While not an ideal ending, it is comforting nonetheless to know that your subconscious understands our connection. That one may not exist without the other."

Will's laugh is entirely without mirth. "Yeah, romantic. To know that our wedding dance would be at the end of a rope."

Leaning in Hannibal presses gentle kisses along Will's shoulder, the lightest touch of lips over damp skin. "It was only a dream Will," he reminds, hand a firm pressure over Will's trembling muscles. "We might read any number of things from it, but you must remember that it was not real. This is real. We are real. And while the contents of the dream may seem alarming, I see it as more of an affirmation of our dedication to each other rather than a portent of doom. We are not in danger Will."

"Not in immediate danger," Will says weakly, running his hand through his mop of unruly curls.

Hannibal makes a low noise, turning Will's face with a hand on his jaw. "Never any danger, not for you," he says, voice steel. "I'll see to that myself."

Will can only nod, trapped by the intensity and promise in those dark eyes.

*

Despite being sworn a reprieve, the next few months are a flurry of planning and activity. It seems Hannibal is always off attending some tasting or tour, bringing home swatches of fabric and holding them to Will's eyes with considering looks, or making phone calls to venue after venue to ask about their overhead lighting. Thank God Will's handwriting is shit, or he's pretty sure he'd be roped into inking place cards and personal invitations.

Hannibal is pulled so thin between work and wedding that he barely has time to leave Will any gifts. Will takes this as an opportunity to get his own hands dirty again. There's a sort of perverse delight in it, in leaving grisly and carefully-planned crime scenes around town just to stand before Jack and pretend to deconstruct them for the benefit of the FBI. Even better is the feeling of laying them out for Hannibal, of describing the murders in vivid detail just to see the pride light up his eyes before Will is tackled to the bed or couch or table or whatever other flat surface is nearby.

He's been drawing from his dreams lately.

They come so thick and fast now that he has ample to choose from, picking the darkest and most dreadful before turning them into sprawling, organic pieces for Jack to puzzle over. His favorite so far has been the scales; two men of similar weight and build, who share the same hair color, eye color and strong jaw, hanging at either end of a rope he carefully stretched over high support beams in a barn just outside of town. He had lovingly used a pen-knife to scrawl geometric patterns across their skin, the same on either body, before stringing them up at exactly the same height. With a careful eye he cleaned up after himself, sure to wipe everything down despite his nitrile gloves, before sliding into his car and heading back into Baltimore.

Jack stands before it with a frown, eyebrows knit tight and jaw clicking as he grinds his teeth. “What’s this one supposed to say?”

Will looks up at his hard work, careful to hide the joy that threatens to spill out of him in neverending waves. “He’s found balance in his life. He feels even, like everything is adding up.” He turns to Jack, shrugging one shoulder. “Guess whoever he proposed to said yes.”

If Jack notices the ring on his finger he doesn’t think much of it. Beverly on the other hand crows with excitement, bumping their shoulders together affectionately. “So what’s that all about? I never pegged you for the marrying type, especially to someone like Hannibal Lecter. I can’t even see you getting through the ceremony without passing out, if I’m being honest. That many eyes on you? No way.”

“I don’t see why,” he replies, resisting the urge to scowl. “Hannibal and I are pretty compatible, if you’re looking at it logically. We’re both into art, we both live a fairly quiet lifestyle, we find conversation easy and comfortable. We’re both watchers. He’s interesting. I like interesting people.”

“You both like to talk about weird stuff,” she adds fondly. “Aw, I feel like I’m marrying off my own son.”

“I’m older than you!” Will says indignantly, glasses sliding down his nose as his eyebrows raise.

“My sweet son, off to start a family of his own,” Beverly coos. Her laugh follows Will as he stalks to his car to escape, withdrawing into the safety of his studio to plan his next art piece.

Despite the irritation and indignation he remembers to add her name to the guest list when he gets home.

*

“You’re positively sure these are the only people you’d like to invite?”

Will bites back a sigh as the tailor circles around him, examining his suit again and again before pinning and marking in various places. Hannibal sits on the expensive leather couch meant for observers as he pours over their guest list, occasionally looking up to check on the tailor’s progress or answer questions that Will himself refuses to answer. How the hell should

he know if he's supposed to wear a necktie or a bowtie with a three-piece suit? And is there really that big of a difference between peach and melon as far as fabric colors go?

He takes a deep breath, releasing it slowly before giving a firm nod. "Yes. I'm sure. I don't really know that many people I'd call acquaintances, even less I'd call friends. I wrote down the people I genuinely like, I'm good with them."

Hannibal hums, sweeping over the list once more. "There are only five names on here."

"The lady who owns the gallery downtown, Alana, Beverly Katz, my aunt Claire, and the girl who babysits the dogs when we go on vacation," Will lists, holding up a finger with each name. "That's it. Weren't we having a small wedding anyway?"

Hannibal looks up at him, face calm. "Small is a relative term, darling Will."

"...how many people are on your list?"

"When you realize that many weddings consist of over two-hundred people…"

"Hannibal Lecter I swear…"

Hannibal's smile is in no way sheepish, despite the innocent act he's putting on. "Fifty isn't really that bad…"

Will nearly faints. "*Fifty*? I don't even know fifty people! How...how is that small? I thought the entire guest list combined would be less than fifty people!"

A soothing noise is Hannibal's only response as he writes a few things down on his list, the calming scratch of the pen managing to ease Will's nerves a bit. He can't help but picture the swirling masses of people paying far too much attention to him; the thought already makes him itch a bit under the collar. With a sigh he lifts his arm, trying not to show his discomfort over a grown man fiddling around near his armpit.

Give him dead bodies any day, this wedding stuff may actually kill him.

*

Will is barely through security when Brian Zeller is on him, pressing a mug of hot coffee into his hand. While he appreciates the sudden appearance of caffeine, he knows this can't bode well. Zeller has even added just the right amount of cream.

"What's going on?" Will asks slowly, taking a sip and letting the warmth course through him.

Zeller gives a nervous smile. "What, a guy can't bring another guy a cup of coffee without an ulterior motive?"

"No."

Blowing out a hard breath, Zeller shoves his hands in his pockets as they walk towards Jack's office. "Jack is in a mood today. He's pissed we haven't come up with a single suspect yet,

earlier when he read the latest Tattle Crime article on the Ripper he threw his laptop across the room."

Will immediately turns, walking back the way he came.

"No no no no," Zeller says quickly, grabbing his jacket sleeve and tugging him back. "If I have to put up with it so do you."

Will grunts, tilting his head back as he drinks the coffee in a few rapid gulps. He's going to need another cup immediately. "So what does he want me here for? I just show up for crime scenes and tell him what I see, I'm not even properly trained for FBI work. I'm an artist."

"Yeah, but you have the brain for it," Zeller points out. "Jack always says yours is a wasted talent, so he's going to do everything he can to keep you under his thumb."

"Let's see how that goes for him," Will mutters, eyebrows knit. When they reach the office Jimmy and Beverly are already there, both clearly uncomfortable with the frigid atmosphere. Jack hunches behind his desk with his arms folded, jaw set in a tense line as the two men enter. Will already wants to crawl out of his skin.

"You two. Sit. We're going over everything from the beginning, we're going to look at every single detail until we come up with a new angle to approach." The fine lines surrounding Jack's eyes and between his eyebrows seem so much more pronounced now, patches of gray starting to sprout at his temple. He looks so much older than he did half a year ago.

It's all because of Will and Hannibal. There is a perverse sort of delight in that knowledge.

Will glances at Beverly before nodding, pulling a chair up from the wall and slowly lowering himself into it. There are a thousand other things he'd rather be doing right now, but the look on Jack's face makes it clear that he's not letting any of them go until he gets what he wants. They're in this for the long haul.

Beverly goes first, detailing the evidence - or lack thereof - from the crime scenes. Price and Zeller lay out photos of each body, going over each wound and laceration with a fine tooth comb to check for anything they may have missed. Will gives the same profile he's given since the beginning; a middle-aged man in good shape judging by the strength and agility the murders would have taken. Wealth, intelligence, a lover of fine art and irony. Used to some sort of work with his hands; perhaps a former surgeon or tailor or artist, something that takes a keen eye and a steady touch.

"And he's courting someone," he adds through a yawn. "Someone who has accepted him for who or what he is, the monster he's made of himself. I don't know if it's an accomplice or merely a spectator, but it's someone who knows what he's doing."

Jack drums his fingers against his desk, shaking his head. "There has to be something new. Something we're missing. Some step we haven't taken yet, something that will steer us in the right direction."

“We can check for any recent weddings, or any coming up,” Jimmy suggests, massaging his temples with his fingers. They’re all flagging, none of this is going anywhere.

“Start with Will, he’s creepy enough,” Beverly suggests. For a moment Will’s blood runs cold, but everyone laughs - including Jack - and he manages to breathe again.

“You’re out of the wedding,” he manages to joke, clutching his coffee cup in front of him like a lifeline.

*

Hannibal manages to restrain himself from turning the day into a three-ring circus.

They wake in their own bed, eat in their own kitchen, and shower and shave in their own bathroom. Will manages to sit still and let Hannibal fix his hair; it’s a special occasion, he can give him this once. By the time he’s dressed in jeans and a flannel it’s almost noon and they’ve got to leave for the venue if they want to be on time. Their suits, safely packed away in garment bags, are tucked into the car. Will says one quick goodbye to the pack before he’s ushered into the passenger seat and they’re on their way.

Silence fills the car, nothing to disturb it but the soft sound of tires over pavement. Somewhere nearby a car horn goes off, drawing Will’s head towards the sound. Instead his eyes land on Hannibal, calm and collected in the driver’s seat.

“Are you very uncomfortable?” he asks, hand seeking out Will’s. “Nervous?”

Will grins, giving a gentle squeeze. “About marriage? No. Especially not about marrying you. A little anxious about so many sets of eyes on me at once, but I’ll get over it.”

Hannibal nods. “I can’t express how grateful I am that you’ve been so compliant through the whole process. I know you’d prefer something quick and easy in front of a judge, but I have appearances to keep up.”

“I understand,” Will says, shrugging. “One evening of merciless attention won’t kill me.”

Looking over briefly, Hannibal offers a fleeting smirk. “I hope not. I have plans for you tonight, my dear.”

From there on it’s a flurry of activity. They’re greeted at the church by the priest and the wedding planner, both of whom have last minute instructions to cover before the ceremony. Next they’re led to the dressing room, where they change in relative silence. Once Will’s shirt is buttoned Hannibal pulls him close, slipping an emerald green tie around his neck and knotting it carefully.

“I have one more gift for you, before you’re legally mine,” he says softly, brushing back a curl that tries to escape from Will’s carefully styled hair. Hannibal reaches into his pocket, pulling out a small box and passing it over.

Will glances up before turning his attention to the box, carefully lifting the lid and setting it aside. Inside lay two perfect cufflinks, highly polished cabochons carved out of bone.

Hannibal reaches forward to lift them out, fastening them in place when Will holds his wrists out. His voice is soft when he speaks, reverential. “They are from the first man I killed for you,” he murmurs, lifting his hands to cup Will’s face. Will is pierced by his gaze, heart beating fast as he’s pinned down by the emotion in Hannibal’s eyes. “I fed you his heart before I led you upstairs and took you for my own. I knew, even then. Just as I know now. We are destined for each other, destined to have this world for our own. I would carve out a thousand hearts for your happiness, just as you will break and bend for mine.” Leaning in, he brushes their lips together in the barest hint of a kiss. “Now. I believe there is a wedding to attend.”

The wedding itself is uneventful, as far as weddings go. He has been spared having to write his own words, they simply repeat the vows and verses given to them and kiss before a god they don’t believe in and a crowd of people who will never truly know who they are. Still, the church is filled with the sound of clapping and cheering as they kiss. Will can’t help but think of sheep, happily herded into the slaughterhouse, bleating all the way until the blade hits their neck.

They receive their guests, Hannibal ever gracious and Will ever awkward, greeting them one by one as they come out of the chapel. Once everyone is cleared out they meet with a photographer for photos. It ended up being the hardest sell for Hannibal; Will has always hated having photos taken of himself, he’s not exactly sure he can sparkle on camera like his (new) husband does. Thankfully the photographer is keen to his discomfort, doing everything she can to make him laugh and keep his mind on his newly married status as she clicks away.

After the last click of the shutter there is finally silence.

Hannibal checks his watch before pulling Will close, pressing their mouths together firmly. “We have twenty minutes to get to the hall,” he murmured, stroking firm hands along his back. “How do you feel?”

Will laughs, dazed and fidgeting, but happy nonetheless. “Good, actually. Great. It wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be, I just have to make it through the reception and then I can relax.”

“You are handling it beautifully, my darling,” Hannibal soothes, kissing him again. “You can sleep on the plane tonight, and for as long as you want in the hotel tomorrow.” Their bags are already packed and waiting by the door, filled with everything they might need during their month-long honeymoon in Italy. “I made sure not to plan anything until Tuesday so that you may rest and recover.”

Relief washes over Will, shoulders relaxing as the tension leaves his body. “You’re amazing,” he breathes gratefully. “Definitely the best husband I’ve ever had.”

Hannibal laughs, offering his arm. “Come, the car is waiting outside. Our guests will be expecting us soon.”

They are greeted by two things as they leave the church; the first is a sleek black Bugatti, the driver standing at attention by the back door, ready to open it so that they can slide in.

The second is Jack Crawford.

Will frowns, his grip tightening on Hannibal's arm. He swallows hard as a curious dread fills him. "Jack...I thought you were working today? You got our invitation, right?"

Jack offers a smile, and Will's dread intensifies. "I did, and I appreciate the thought. I am working though, unfortunately. You know it's been a long few months dealing with the Ripper case."

"I do, hopefully it comes together while we're away. If not I'm sure you'll have me back as soon as I'm back on American soil."

Jack shakes his head. "Might not be necessary, Will. Because something occurred to me today while I was going over the case files. Something we kept missing because it was right in front of our faces." He sighs, folding his arms. "An art lover, a courtship, someone with steady hands...I can't believe I didn't see it before."

A chill runs down Will's spine, like ice water slipping along his nerves. He's not sure if the ground is spinning or if it's all in his head, but he's grateful for Hannibal's strong arm to keep him upright. It was arrogant, so stupidly arrogant, to describe his own life in such vivid detail and expect it to throw Jack off of the scent. Supremely stupid to go hunting without Hannibal, to kill without his careful eye and expertise.

"Jack, I-"

"I know Will, and I'm sorry," Jack says, a look of genuine regret on his face. "But Dr. Lecter, I'm going to need you to come with me."

Chapter End Notes

Guys I am SO sorry for the late chapter! Life very much got in the way of updating on time last week, so thank you for your patience. Here it is, only two left now!

I'm on Tumblr here!

One Last Kiss Goodbye

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal's hands return to Will's, gripping them tight. "I will find a way to get back to you someday, and we will run. You'll wait for me? As long as it takes?"
>
> Will nods resolutely. "I'll be ready." Still shaking, still feeling as if the walls are pressing in on him, he stands and walks to the other side of the table. With all the emotion he can muster, all the words unsaid and all the fear in his heart, he kisses Hannibal for what he hopes will not be the last time. Lips parted, tongue pressing into Hannibal's mouth for a desperate taste, he embraces him as if they might melt together and never be parted.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The snap of a door, the revving of an engine, and Will is standing alone before the church.

The world shifts underneath him and he has to struggle to maintain his balance. Hannibal didn't fight, he didn't say a damn word under all of Jack's accusations. He smiled. Arrogant and so damn pleased, he smiled while Jack laid out every reason why he *must* be the Chesapeake Ripper. Will can hear his own profile playing back in his head like an audio clip stuck on repeat, grinding into his nerves and making his head spin. He is furious at his own arrogance. How could he describe their lives in such vivid detail and think they'd be above suspicion? How could they be so foolish as to think they were above reproach?

His stomach gives a lurch, and it's all he can do to make it to the bushes in time to lose the contents of his stomach.

After a few minutes he manages to get off of his hands and knees, heart thudding in his chest as he surveys the parking lot. The slick black Bugatti still waits at the curb, keys in the ignition. They were supposed to slide in together, to steal a few private moments before making their way to the reception. The same rental would swing them by the house for their bags before they drove it to the airport.

Trembling, Will stumbles over and slides in behind the wheel. It's a twenty minute drive to get to Jack and Hannibal. He's not sure what he's going to do yet, but he's got twenty minutes to figure it out.

*

"Will, before you start-"

“Jack, *where* is my husband?” Will barks. He barely recognizes his own voice, confrontation has never been his forte. The rage boiling inside of him is too much to contain, and it’s all he can do not the tear into Jack with his bare hands. He can picture it so easily, breaking his bones, tearing his flesh, getting bloody vengeance for trying to take away what he’s worked so hard for. It would serve Jack right.

“Will, calm down,” Jack says, holding his hands up in what he must imagine is a placating motion. “Listen, he’s already given his confession.”

Will stops, that same dizzy feeling from before returning. “He *what*?”

Jack nods, having the decency to look sorry. “Without a moment’s hesitation. Said he didn’t want to draw this out and make it any more painful for you than it had to be, which may be the only tiny shred of humanity left in him showing through. He asked for his lawyer before he gives his written statement, and then I have to remand him to custody.”

Black starts to creep into the corners of Will’s vision, all the noise in the room sounding as if it’s coming from underwater. “This isn’t possible,” he whispers. “There’s no way.”

A firm hand grips his shoulder; he resists the urge to break it. “I know this is hard, Will,” Jack says softly. “Today of all days. I know it’s a shock and that you don’t want to believe it. But we have his guilt from his own lips. He’s copped to it. If I could do anything to take that away I would, but there’s no going back now.”

Will jerks away, wild eyed and frantic. “I want to talk to him.”

“Will, you know I can’t do that,” Jack says softly.

“Yes you can!” he bites back, hands balling into fists. His jaw is tight as he speaks, teeth clenched around his words. “If you’re going to take him away from me I want to see him one last time before you go. I want to...I *need* to say goodbye, Jack.” Suddenly the anger seeps out of him, leaving a scared, shaking boy that doesn’t seem to fit in the skin of a full-grown man. “Please, Jack. I helped you find him, it’s the least you can do.”

A conflicted sigh passes Jack’s lips as he shakes his head, glancing between Will and the door leading into the interrogation room. “Ten minutes.”

“Of privacy?”

“I can’t give you complete privacy, there’s a video feed coming from the room that I’m not authorized to cut. There’s no audio though, so you can get whatever explanation you need. Say whatever you’ve got to say, I won’t be listening.”

Will raises his palms to his eyes, grinding the heels in so hard he sees spots. He’s not entirely sure he won’t be sick again, but he’s got to hold it together for at least ten minutes. “Alright. Alright thank you,” he whispers, trembling from head to toe. He watches as Jack punches in the key code, watches as he twists the door handle and pulls. Suddenly his feet are moving of their own volition, pulling him into the cool, dimly-lit room.

The door swings shut and a latch sounds behind him. Before him Hannibal sits with a curious look on his face, hands folded before him, suit as well-pressed and perfect as it was an hour ago as they stood at the altar.

“Hannibal, what have you done?”

Hannibal frowns, eyebrows knit as Will sits across the table from him. Their hands immediately clasp together, fingers tight as if they wish to link together so they may never be parted. “Will,” he says firmly, eyes severe. “Tell me you’ve said nothing to implicate yourself.”

“No, and I wish I could say the same for you!” he replies, nearly hysterical. “You didn’t try to fight it, you just caved! We could have found a way out of this, I could have set up an alibi for you, anything. What the hell were you thinking?”

Hannibal makes a soft sound to quiet him, lifting a hand to cup his cheek. His hands are shaking. Will has never seen Hannibal tremble before. “I am thinking only of you, darling Will. The world is far more beautiful with you in it, and I fear you will not handle being locked away as I can. You strong, savage, delicate thing. Let me bear this burden for you, let me protect you from this.”

Will leans in, blinking back the wetness that threatens to overtake his eyes. “We could have *run*,” he hisses. “We could have found a way out.”

“I know,” Hannibal whispers. “I know, dearest love. If I could redo things with more time to think we would have found a way. But I am here now, and I will do anything I can do make sure you walk away from this unscathed.”

Will presses his lips together, shaking his head. “I’m not leaving here without you,” he murmurs. “Not on your life.”

Hannibal’s hands return to Will’s, gripping them tight. “I will find a way to get back to you someday, and we will run. You’ll wait for me? As long as it takes?”

Will nods resolutely. “I’ll be ready.” Still shaking, still feeling as if the walls are pressing in on him, he stands and walks to the other side of the table. With all the emotion he can muster, all the words unsaid and all the fear in his heart, he kisses Hannibal for what he hopes will not be the last time. Lips parted, tongue pressing into Hannibal’s mouth for a desperate taste, he embraces him as if they might melt together and never be parted.

When he pulls away it feels like a blow to the gut.

“I intend to see you soon,” he whispers, touching Hannibal’s cheek before turning and walking out. He does not look back.

*

Hannibal accepts Will’s kiss eagerly, resigned to the unfortunate fact that this may be their last kiss for some time. He does not regret the choice he’s made. He will die a thousand

deaths before letting Will suffer one, even if it means their separation. Anything as long as he knows Will is safe.

When Will licks into his mouth with a desperate sound Hannibal parts his lips easily, letting him take his fill. He is moments from tangling their tongues together when he feels something press into his mouth. Something slim and metallic, warmed by Will's mouth with a wickedly sharp edge on one side.

A razor blade.

Pulling away, there is confidence in Will's eyes as he meets Hannibal's. Clever boy. Hannibal tucks the blade against the edge of his cheek, watching as Will bids him one last goodbye and turns away.

Clever, clever boy.

*

Will knows that the chances of this working are slim, and that so much of it rides on him managing to stay calm despite all the agents and officers walking past his car. He knows how Jack operates. He brought Hannibal in himself and cuffless, there's a slim chance that if he intended to toy with Hannibal first he might have refrained from making a scene of it. A thousand different scenarios play through Will's head, although few of them don't end in a hail of bullets and blood. Their own blood, Jack's, he doesn't care. This will not end without bloodshed.

For a moment he considers praying, but he realizes that if God exists he probably isn't on their side.

Seconds become minutes, which stretch into a full hour. Will is beginning to rethink his plan when the car door opens and Hannibal slides in.

He is calm, smiling. "I would suggest you begin driving, Will."

Will goes into autopilot, putting the car in gear and pulling out at a reasonable speed. He can't draw attention, which is hard when you're driving a Bugatti. "There's no blood…"

"I struck from behind," Hannibal explains. "He may very well live. I hope he does, I would greatly enjoy knowing that he'll spend his life cursing my name."

"He's going to think you kidnapped me," Will reasons, to which Hannibal laughs.

"My concern is getting out of the country. Let him think what he thinks, let him spend his days worrying over how he's let you down. Lost you. I believe we'll be in time to catch our flight if we hurry."

"No," Will says, voice wavering. At Hannibal's Look he shakes his head. "No plane. They'll know we have tickets out of the country, that's where they're going to look for us. And I'm...I'm not leaving without the dogs."

Hannibal frowns, thoroughly displeased. “Will, this isn’t the first time you’ve put us at risk because of the dogs.”

Will swallows hard. “I know, I know. Just...trust me on this. We’re getting the dogs and we’re driving out to Wolf Trap. I’ve got a way out.” He glances over, biting hard into his bottom lip. “Trust me. Please?”

A long, tense silence stretches between them before Hannibal nods.

Will hasn’t taken the boat out in years, doesn’t even know if it still runs. Still, it’s their only chance.

Chapter End Notes

Will is not leaving without his God damn dogs, okay? I will never accept any ending where Will is separated from his babies.

Madrid

Chapter Summary

The end and the beginning.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Madrid comes alive when the sun goes down. Residents and tourists alike spill onto the streets to enjoy the sweet sticky night that July has to offer, laughing and singing and filling the city with life. The locals settle into their favorite bars and taverns, content to drink and watch futbol as the tourists stumble around with their cameras out and heads in the clouds. Somewhere in the city a man plays guitar, the gentle notes drifting over the crowds up to the balconies and verandas above. The sweet and spicy smell of a vendor frying churros adds a spicy sweetness to the night air.

In a penthouse high above a window is propped open, the summer air drifting into the apartment inside. A man sits on the window ledge, back to the sill as one leg dangles out over a sharp drop to the street below. He is sweating but content; his black shirt is unbuttoned and hanging open, chestnut brown hair stuck to his neck and temples as the humidity dampens his skin. His eyes are closed, breath even as he listens to la guitarra below.

Hannibal watches Will from bed, happy to sit in comfortable silence as his lover enjoys the sounds of the city. Will has blossomed since their first night in Spain. His hands are rarely still, constantly painting and creating and bringing magic and monsters into an otherwise mundane and colorless world. The influence of their new home flows through him, apparent in the pieces he creates. He is a river, constantly moving forward. Forever flowing.

Spain turns out to be a lovely surprise. Just the right mix of culture and calm, they spend their days wandering their new home and finding their place in it. For once Will has a head start on the local language; his early days in Florida had more of an affect then he realized, Spanish flows from the back of his mind without much conscious effort. Hannibal picks it up quickly enough, the beauty of European languages is that they all work in a similar manner. If you know one you can learn many.

Hannibal himself feels different now. Looser, easier. How could he care about the petty problems of his past, when this delightful creature takes up all the space in his head? This beautiful beast who has left everything behind for him, who has peeled back his old skin to become something brave and bold and brutal.

They have found their place, he cares about little else.

With a stretch and a yawn Will stands, bringing his dangling foot in and moving to the bed. He strips his shirt off, stepping over Winston as he tosses it to the laundry hamper before sliding under the covers next to Hannibal. “I found a few studios for rent in the area, I’m going to check them out tomorrow while you’re at work.”

Hannibal has accepted a position at Universidad Complutense de Madrid as their new professor of philosophy. Not as Hannibal Lecter of course, no. All of his papers refer to him as Petras Sulskis, Will as his loving and faithful husband Sebastian as far as the Spanish government is concerned. It all seems almost too easy, but they’re not going to spend their lives looking over their shoulders. They refuse to live for fear, choosing only to live for each other.

Hannibal lifts Will’s hand, lovingly brushing his lips along cracked, well-worked fingertips. He kisses down to the wedding band on Will’s finger, gripped by the knowledge that they are no longer on borrowed time. This life is theirs, to enjoy as they see fit.

For now the night is sticky and sweet, and Will is sliding a thigh over his own and kissing sweetly along his jaw. “You’re lost in thought, old man,” he says, smiling as sharp teeth nip at delicate skin.

Hannibal scoffs, lightly pinching the back of Will’s thigh. “Old man. How you treat me, how I suffer.”

Will makes a soft sound, a little “tsk” behind his teeth. “I treat you so nicely, and you treat me doubly well.” Questing hands slide along Hannibal’s hip, dipping down to stroke over his lower back and across his ass. “Actually, I’d like to show you right now just how nicely I can treat you.”

Hannibal laughs lightly, unwilling to make life too easy for him. “It’s awfully hot out, and I’m such an old fellow, are you sure it’s safe?”

Will laughs, a bright, affectionate sound. Turning away for a moment, he retrieves a small bottle of slick from the nightstand and sets it on the mattress. “I’ll do all the work, you just lay there and try not to break a hip.” There is a surprised gasp and more laughter as Hannibal surges up, grabbing Will and tossing him easily onto his back. “Well, if you insist.”

“I do, I insist very much,” Hannibal murmurs, eyes dark as he looks down at the man laid out before him. He knows in the grand scheme of life their time together has been short, but he cannot help but feel he’s lived a multitude of lives with Will. If he believed in past lives he would be quite sure they’ve spent each of them together, beautiful and terrible and unstoppable.

They kiss like they are made of honey, sweet and sticky and slow as their mouths press and taste and move together with practised ease. They fuck like they’re frozen in time, like the clock will never move forward and they can spend eternity tangled together in bed. Hannibal holds Will’s thighs apart with strong hands and gives torturously slow thrusts that drag across his prostate. Will sighs and groans and begs so nicely, one hand gripping Hannibal’s shoulder like a vice while the other is thrown carelessly across his eyes.

The rhythm is easy, and life is good.

On the street below the tourists float sleepily back to their hotels for a night of rest before venturing off once more in the morning. The vendors selling street food clean up their carts, the locals leaving the bars and staggering home. Soon there is only one man playing guitar, his soft strumming becoming the soundtrack for a new beginning and a happy end.

Chapter End Notes

Holy shit. Holy shit? Holy shit. I can't believe it's done. In June I got this idea for Will as this goth, grotesque artist, and decided that I wanted to write my very first Hannigram fic. Up until then I sort of exclusively shipped Chilton/Will, and wanted to try my hand at writing Hannibal. And now here we are.

The boys got away! Hurrah!

I can't thank you all enough for the incredible support you've shown me over the past few months. It was so delightful and encouraging to read your comments, and I've made so many new buddies thanks to this story. I am lucky to have you all in my life!

I will take a little break from the Canvases verse (oh my God please feel free to write for these boys if you ever feel the need I'll totally link it into a series), but if you have questions about how something went down, how things will look going forward, which dog is Hannibal's favorite, come ask me on my tumblr. I'll give you any details you want! Come friend me and we'll geek out about Hannibal (or Marvel, or Mad Max, or fairies, or foxes, or Dominion, or Face Off, or any of the other shit I love) and totally be friends!

I love you all, you amazing people. <3

Works inspired by this one

(Podfic)Canvases by Hannibible-and-The-Holy-Graham (Just_East)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!